

Fall/Winter 2018

# New Mexico WILD!

The Semi-annual Publication of the  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

**Chaco  
Canyon:  
Modern-Day  
Threats to an  
Ancient Treasure**

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The Semiannual Publication of the  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
**VOLUME 15, NUMBER 2**  
**FALL 2018**

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New Mexico Wild staff, including our Wilderness Rangers, summer 2018.



**ON THE COVER:**  
A Pueblo dancer in Pueblo Bonita during the summer solstice.  
Photo by Tisha Broska

# WHILE WE CAN

BY MARK ALLISON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



“Shangri-La Camp” on a Wild Alaska river. Photo by Irene Owsley

I sit down to write this just back from northwestern Alaska where seven family members, friends and colleagues helped me celebrate my 50th birthday and my fifth year at New Mexico Wild in one of the largest, most intact Wilderness areas in the world. Three hundred and fifty miles on a wild river in four canoes over twenty-four days. Other than two National Park Service staff “on patrol” a few days into the trip (one of whom grew up in Santa Fe, of course), we saw no one for three weeks. It wasn’t until two days before our appointed gravel bar pick-up spot with the bush plane that we started to see several Native families and one other canoe group. Just grizzlies, caribou, musk ox, wolves, red fox and numerous birds ... as well as salmon practically jumping in the boats. All above the Arctic Circle and about as far away from a road as you can get on this planet.



The choice of the Noatak River, the longest “Wild” designated Wild and Scenic River, was fitting during this 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The trip exceeded my sky-high expectations in every respect.

I feel so fortunate to have had this experience – the ability to do it, the means to do it and a workplace that understands and supports such a trip. I’m still dumbfounded by the vastness, the beauty, the sense of going back in time, the chance to glimpse a veritable Garden of Eden, and the wonderful, humbling sense of space and isolation. It was a qualitatively different wilderness experience than I’ve ever had. I wondered on the way home, briefly, if I’d be ruined for any “lesser” wilderness experience. Instead, I’ve found myself more certain than ever how important conserving wild places is and rejuvenated in my commitment to protecting the public lands and roadless areas we have left in New Mexico.

While any transition back to civilization and work from where we were would be abrupt, this one was particularly reeling. I learned that one of New Mexico Wild’s long-time supporters and part-time employees had been killed in a horrific hit-and-run accident in Albuquerque while he was riding his bike to work. Ron Brinkley was a kind and thoughtful man who





shunned credit or recognition and who lived his convictions. He decided after 9/11 that he would no longer own a car to reduce his carbon footprint and his participation in an oil-based economy. He instead rode his bike everywhere, including to New Mexico Wild. Ironically, perhaps, one of the few times he drove a car each year was for us ... to deliver this very newsletter to communities across New Mexico.

I spoke to Ron right before my trip. He was one of only a few who had heard of the river we'd be floating. He sent me a long e-mail shortly after our conversation, offering friendly advice, making connections for me with friends in Fairbanks, suggesting books to read and, as usual, discussing his abiding interest and respect for Native cultures. I didn't really have time to read his e-mail until after I got back and after he was gone.

Perhaps the connection between my trip and his untimely death is tenuous. But I'm reminded that life is short and that there is no guarantee about tomorrow.

I'm glad I was able to take my trip to Alaska while I could. While I hope and plan to go back, I know that nothing is certain.

Ron led his life living his convictions, spending time doing what he could to be helpful, dedicating himself to protecting what we have left. I'll miss Ron, but I'll remember what a good person he was and the choices he made to do what he could when he could. He quietly contributed his time and talents to what mattered to him – conserving public lands and wild places. He left us too soon, but he did what he could while he was here. That's an example I know I'll remember.

With gratitude for Ron and wild places,

*New Mexico Wilderness Alliance*

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

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**What is Wilderness?**

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

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# NORTHERN NEW MEXICO REPORT

## Pecos Wilderness Stewardship Update

BY BERNARD TIBBETTS, SANTA FE COMMUNITY ORGANIZER



Left: Eagle Scout project: replacing signs and posts at multiple trail junctions along the La Vega Loop. Photo by Mark C. Allen; Right: Warming the bench before installing on the Winsor Trail. Photo by Bernard Tibbetts

New Mexico Wild is working to improve recreational experiences, while also reducing user conflicts on the popular trails leading to the Pecos Wilderness. Due to the steep incline of the Winsor Trail, we are working with the

Santa Fe National Forest to build and place two benches. After an extensive search for a builder, we finally struck gold with Mike Steinzig from Los Alamos Makerspace, a non-profit that provides workspace and tools to perform projects, like wood work-

ing. Thanks to Mike, REI, National Forest Foundation and the Santa Fe Garden Club for making this project possible.

New Mexico Wild teamed up with the Eagle Scouts to install twelve signs and posts that needed to be replaced along the junctions of Winsor, Lower Nambe, Upper Nambe and Rio Nambe Trails, as well as Puerto Nambe.

We also worked with volunteers to clear the Lower Nambe Trail #403, Glorieta Baldy Trail #175, Rio Frijoles Trail and Mora Flats Trails. We cleared over 50 downed trees. The trails look much better and are easier to navigate. We also removed most of the old bridge railing debris from the Rio Nambe crossing on the Winsor Trail.

Thanks to all the wonderful volunteers who came out to make it happen. If you are interested in volunteering for one of our service projects in the Pecos Wilderness, email [bernard@nmwild.org](mailto:bernard@nmwild.org). 🐾

## NATIONAL FOREST PLANNING UPDATE

All five national forests in New Mexico continue to move through the process of revising their forest plans, the “bird’s eye view” documents which guide each forest’s management for several decades. These forest plan revisions include inventories of lands with Wilderness characteristics and of river segments which are eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation. One of the decisions made in the plans is whether the forest will manage inventoried areas for preservation of Wilderness or Wild and Scenic values.

New Mexico Wild conducted its own extensive inventory of lands and rivers in the Gila and other national forests and submitted data about which areas we believe have Wilderness characteristics and which rivers we believe are eligible for Wild and Scenic designation. We have provided general guidance and other site-specific comments to the other forests.

We expect draft plans from the Cibola, Santa Fe and Carson national forests this year. Both the Santa Fe and the Carson continue to hold periodic open houses to update the public on the progress of their plans. The Gila has recently published its Wilderness inventory and evaluation. While we are generally pleased with many aspects of the Gila’s inventory, we also have several concerns that they may have cut out areas too early in the inventory process. We’ll be working

to ensure the forest considers potential Wilderness as extensively as possible.

This summer also saw the first published document from the Lincoln, the forest that began its plan revision latest. The Lincoln released its “Assessment,” which looks at current conditions on the forest. This is the first step before actual analysis and planning, in which the Forest Service documents what the forest looks like at present.

Next steps will include documenting where change in the current plan is needed and inventorying its lands and rivers as the other forests have done.

If you would like to receive updates on forest plan revisions from each of the forests, you can sign up for plan-related emails on each forest’s website, and we will also continue to update our members. 🐾



Cibola Sunset. Photo by Andrew Reville



# UNM WILD: Hopes for the Gila

BY HANNAH PAUL



Every year, as the semester ends, the UNM Wilderness Alliance heads out for a few days of much needed freedom – from responsibility, stress, routine and especially from the crowded confines of civilization.

And where better to escape than to the world’s first designated Wilderness area? The Gila has been our haven, our refuge, where we go to be absorbed in natural media rather than social media; to be surrounded by towering walls of rock rather than white walls of cement; to wade through a river of crisp, clear water rather than a river of rushing people. For us (and I’m sure you all would agree), this is therapeutic.

As students, we devote most of our time to our studies, jobs, campus organizations and other associated responsibilities, reserving little time to enjoy our outdoor passions. So when we have the chance to spend several days in the sun, carry tents in our backpacks instead of textbooks and forego a hot shower for a dip in the Jordan Hot Springs, we take it!

Having twice participated in this annual adventure, I have witnessed firsthand just how much the experience brings us closer together as a group. It fuels our passion for the club and its mission – to encourage and provide opportunities for exploration, appreciation and defense of New Mexico’s natural beauty. A river as free-flowing as the Gila is a rare gem these days, as many of our waterways are interrupted by dams or development. As New Mexico residents, we are lucky to have such easy access to this special site. The unique beauty it possesses, the vital role it plays in the surrounding ecosystem and the enrichment it brings to our lives prove, in our minds, that it more than deserves designation as a Wild and Scenic River. Therefore, we stand with New Mexico Wild in its campaign to provide the Gila with the protection and recognition it deserves.

Throughout this year, UNM Wilderness Alliance aims to be more active in advocating for the protection of the lands we love. We are re-organizing our meetings to include education on public lands and the current dangers they face, writing letters to our representatives and increasing outreach to both the UNM and Albuquerque communities. We call out to all students and community members to join us in broadening our impact in the New Mexico community! **To find out more, email [unmwild@unm.edu](mailto:unmwild@unm.edu) or check out our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/groups/unmwild/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/unmwild/).**



UNM Wilderness Alliance students enjoyed getting away from classwork and into the Gila Wilderness. Photos courtesy of Hannah Paul

## New Mexico Wild Holiday Party and Annual Meeting

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21ST  
7-10 PM**

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Light Hors d'oeuvres  
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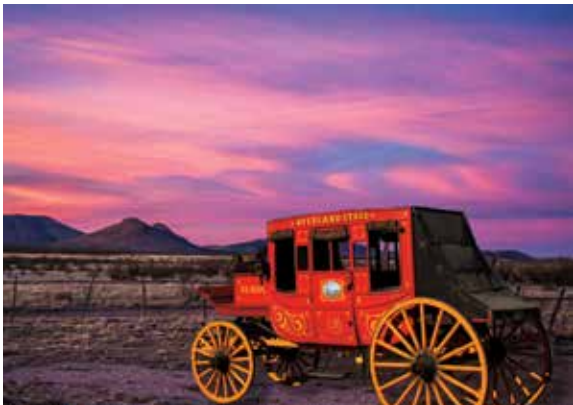


# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO UPDATE

## Monuments to Main Street BY CHERYL FALLSTEAD



September’s third annual Monuments to Main Street (M2M) celebration of the communities and national monuments in and around Doña Ana County was a complete success, if large numbers of people from the Mesilla Valley and beyond participating in a wide range of events is any indicator. Residents and visitors alike took part in activities ranging from festivals and history tours to outdoor adventures of many kinds.



Stagecoach at the Corralitos; yoga in the monument; Photos by Karla Watson

Labor Day weekend, the start of Monuments to Main Street, was filled with annual events like the Hatch Chile Festival and the Harvest Wine Festival as well as outings such as hikes, aerial tours, river rafting, birding trips, yoga at Dripping Springs and a bicycle ride to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

M2M held its official kickoff celebration September 8 in Las Cruces’ Mesquite Historic District featuring live music, “folklórico” dancing, stagecoach rides, an arts and farmers market, Chocolate on the Camino

Real Trail, and the “What’s Your Las Cruces?” oral history project.

Throughout the month, participants hiked, biked, rafted, did yoga, painted outdoors, viewed art and films, listened to music, ate delicious food, drank wine, explored area history, and rode in jeeps, airplanes and stagecoaches. Monument tours were offered by a variety of groups, including New Mexico Wild, the Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, the Green Chamber of Commerce, Sierra Club, Southern New Mexico

Story continued on page 22



## WOLF UPDATE

We are continuing to fight in the federal courts for the future of Mexican gray wolves in the Southwest. Our challenge to the Department of Justice’s so-called “McKittrick Policy,” which directs U.S. attorneys not to prosecute defendants who kill endangered species if they cannot prove the person knew the exact biological species they were harming, will be before the court again this fall.

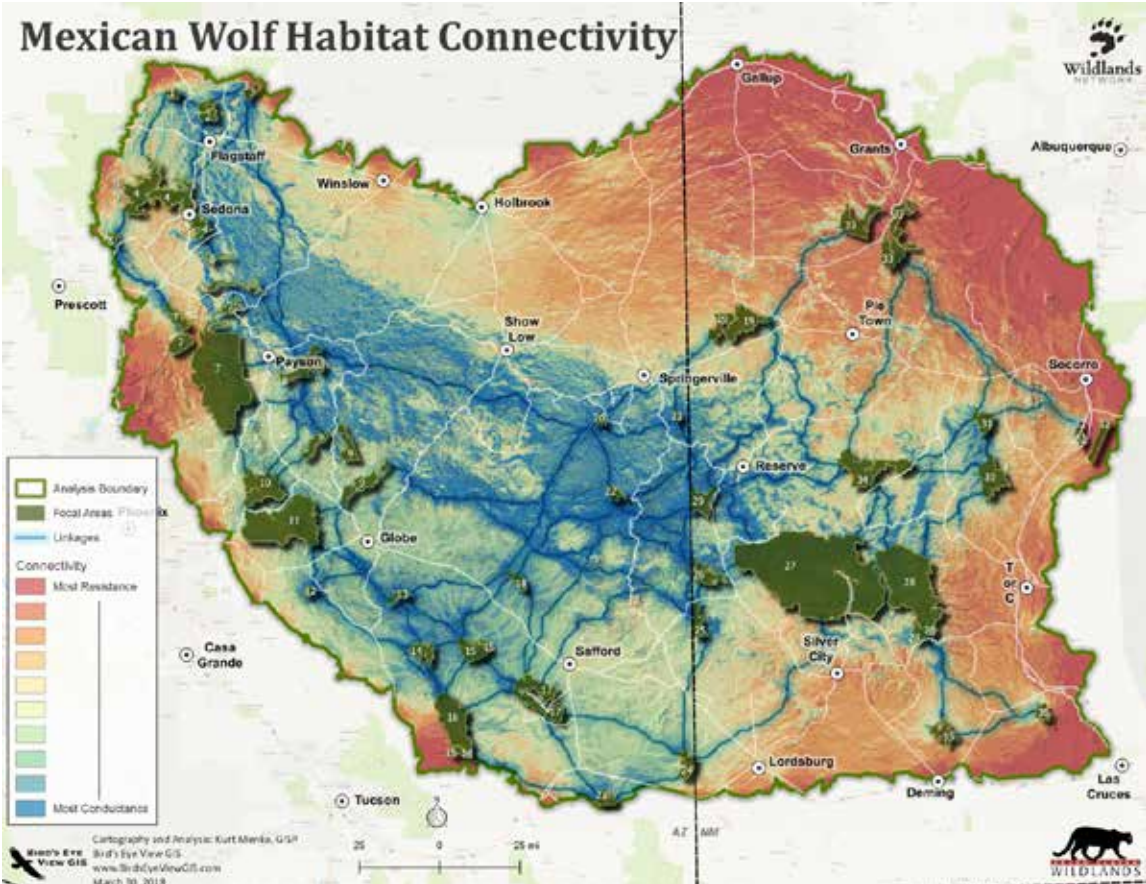
The policy has allowed killers of Mexican wolves to avoid punishment by saying they thought they were shooting coyotes or dogs. Illegal killing is by far the highest cause of mortality for Mexican wolves, and a defense of “mistaken identity” is not provided in either the Endangered Species Act or in decades of caselaw.

We were thrilled in June of 2017 when we won this case in U.S. District Court. The Justice Department appealed that ruling, and we are scheduled to have oral arguments at the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals on Oct. 9. We are still a party in two other federal lawsuits related to Mexican wolves. The first concerns the 2015 wolf management rule created by the Fish and Wildlife Service. Along with many partner organizations, we believe the plan did not adhere to the best available science (indeed, the service did not use the recommendations of its OWN scientific panel),

nor did it do enough to advance the needs of the miniscule wolf population. We challenged that rule and the service’s 2017 Recovery Rule in federal court, based on many of the same concerns.

In both cases, we believe the agency should have expanded the recovery area significantly

further than it did, should not have allowed removal of wolves for reasons other than defense of a person’s life, and should have focused more on getting more wolves into the wild. We received a favorable ruling in the first case in the spring of 2018, and, while both are ongoing, we are optimistic about the outcome of both cases. 🐾







# The Gila River, a Creation Gem BY GRECIA NUÑEZ

Rivers are a source of life for all creation. Waters from rivers are used in prayer, rituals and sacraments. In addition, all religious traditions invite people to reflect upon that which is the sacred source of life by taking time for prayer, reflection, retreat and re-creation in the natural world. Creation and water are sacred gifts that for some traditions reflect the graciousness of the Creator. Receiving these gifts requires thankfulness and stewardship.

The Gila River is the last free-flowing river in southern New Mexico, making it a gem of creation in this desert ecosystem. The Gila River also is a source of spiritual healing and is vital for life itself for people in and around Grant County.

“To violate any essential meaning and value of creation is to violate the nature of the Great Mystery and tear at the fabric of the existence of which we are a part. Protecting biodiversity in every form is, therefore, a moral and religious act,” noted the Rev. Dr. Paul Moore of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Silver City.

Sister Joan Brown, osf, executive director of New Mexico Interfaith Power and Light, works with leaders and people of faith who are supporting the care of the Gila River for many reasons, including intergenerational justice.

“People of all faith traditions are concerned for the welfare of children of all species and future generations. For many New Mexicans, concern for the future is paramount,” she said. “Caring for water, rivers and biosystems so that all species can live, so children can enjoy



Reverend Dr. Paul Moore celebrates the sacredness of water in the desert.

and stand in wonderment at beauty, and everyone can have enough water to drink is vital.”

People of faith understand the deep connection between creation, humans and rivers. This connection runs deeper than the water that flows through the Gila River. It encompasses the habitat created for God’s animals and vegetation along with the majestic scenery and the glimpse of God’s grace when we set foot near or within the river. A free-flowing Gila River and a cared-for watershed bring life to all living things in our region. 🌱

## CARLSBAD UPDATE

A long-awaited plan for the Bureau of Land Management’s Carlsbad region proposes protections for a disappointingly small number of acres with Wilderness values.

The Draft Resource Management Plan Revision (RMP) published by the Carlsbad Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management includes four alternatives as well as a “no action” option.

Like national forests, BLM offices must conduct inventories for lands with Wilderness characteristics when completing long-term plans and must decide whether or not to manage those areas for preservation of their Wilderness values. Carlsbad conducted its own inventory, and New Mexico Wild submitted additional areas totaling 76,255 acres that we believe qualify for Wilderness protection. Unfortunately, the draft plan only recognizes 8,504 acres submitted by New Mexico Wild as having wilderness characteristics, and proposes managing only 5,119 acres total for preservation of Wilderness values in the preferred alternative.

BLM can also receive external nominations for Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, an administrative designation placed on land where special management is needed in recognition of some specific value. ACECs are fairly flexible and can be designated for any reason which requires special attention. In



Dune field on BLM land near Carlsbad. Photo by Jim O'Donnell

2010, New Mexico Wild submitted nominations for four ACECs, which were all aimed at protecting some of southeast New Mexico’s last remaining rivers, archeological and historical sites, and hot spots for endangered species and other special wildlife. Sadly, none of our ACEC proposals are in the BLM’s preferred alternative, but they each still exist in at least one alternative in the draft plan. Comments on the plan are due Nov. 5, and we will be urging BLM to take a more expansive view of both lands with Wilderness characteristics and ACECs. With 85 percent of the federal land in the field office already leased for oil and gas development and much of the remaining 15 percent still available for leasing, it is essential that BLM take steps to

protect some of its last pristine places. BLM’s mission is one of multiple use, and Carlsbad is on the verge of becoming a single-use field office dedicated entirely to oil and gas.

As we’ve waited for the Draft RMP, oil and gas development in the Permian Basin has continued to increase. Many of the places we nominated for protection years ago have been impacted continuously by development. We have worked hard over the last several years to encourage BLM to refrain from leasing parcels in and near these areas before finalizing the RMP. Some of these efforts have been successful, while others have not.

Lease sales on BLM land happen on a quarterly basis, and the Trump administration has demanded an emphasis on domestic energy development, a directive which is affecting public lands in ways ranging from the 2017 national monument “review” to possible drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to continued heavy development of public lands in our own backyard. The Interior Department has also minimized public input in many instances, reducing comment periods on lease sales and other drilling issues from 30 days to 10, eliminating some comment periods altogether and more. We continue to monitor, comment on and, often, protest lease sales in southeast New Mexico that will affect areas we’ve nominated for protection in the RMP or that will affect Carlsbad Caverns National Park. 🌱



# HEART OF THE GILA

From the website [www.heartofthegila.org](http://www.heartofthegila.org): Heart of the Gila seeks to conserve our watersheds and educate children, adults, and decision makers about the ecological, social, economic and cultural values of rivers in New Mexico and the bioregions of the greater Southwest. Heart of the Gila celebrates the life of Ella Jaz Kirk, a young environmental advocate who died with her high school friends, Michael Mahl and Ella Myers, while conducting aerial research on post-fire conditions in the Gila National Forest of New Mexico.

**The Film: Heart of the Gila:** This full-length documentary is already in production. Our film makers are taking the journey down the full length of the Gila river, capturing her canyons, rapids, wildlife and forests on film. We expect “Heart of the Gila” to convey all the reasons to protect the things we hold most precious.

For questions about the project or to find out ways you can help with Heart of the Gila, send inquires to [heartofthegila@gmail.com](mailto:heartofthegila@gmail.com). 🐾



Heart of the Gila Film Project visits Senator Tom Udall in Washington, DC. Pictured here: The moms: Jennifer Douglass, Patrice Mutchnick, and Jennifer Boucher Mahl sharing ideas with the Senator about the long-term protection of the Gila River watershed. We are excited to support the future designation of the Gila as a Wild and Scenic River.

Thank you Senators Udall and Heinrich for your commitment to wild places and honoring the legacy of our children. Ella Myers, Ella Kirk, & Michael Mahl.

To learn more: About the kids: (<http://heartofthegila.org/the-kids/>)  
About the Gila: (<http://heartofthegila.org/the-gila-river/>)  
and our film (<http://heartofthegila.org/the-project/>).

Thanks to David Garcia, our film producer, Todd Schulke, from the Center for Biological Diversity, and New Mexico Wild for making our trip to D.C. possible.

Background photo by David Muench

## THE GILA IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR FLYOVERS

BY U.S. SENATOR MARTIN HEINRICH

I am calling on the Air Force not to expand airspace over the Gila and surrounding areas. Especially when there are other more appropriate overflight options, it makes no sense to threaten what makes the Gila so special and unnecessarily create hostility between the public and the military in New Mexico.

Nearly 100 years ago, a forester named Aldo Leopold recognized the beauty and irreplaceable value of an untrammled area of mountains, rivers, and mesas in southwestern New Mexico. As lands across the West were being broken up by development, roads, and railroads, Leopold proposed that the headwaters of the Gila River should be preserved as the nation’s first road-less, unimpeded wilderness. Today, so many of us are grateful for Leopold’s foresight.

Some of my best memories are the camping trips I’ve been able to take with my wife, Julie, and our two sons in wild places like the Gila Wilderness. I have always been drawn to places like the Gila-landscapes where you can get away from the cell phones, computers and everything else that tends to clutter the mind. Backpacking trips into places like McKenna Park and Turkey Feather Pass, the Jerky Mountains and the Gila River canyon have given me the time and space to grow closer to my family and friends and reflect.

From the outset, local residents have expressed steady and firm opposition to the Air Force’s proposal for the Gila and have made it abundantly clear that low-level flights and flares in wilderness areas would be disruptive to their way of life, threaten public safety and damage the local economy.

The outdoor recreation opportunities in the Gila are integral to the quality of life and economy of Grant and Catron Counties. Visitors from around the world are drawn to the region’s hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and peaceful wilderness. Many local residents—from retirees to young entrepreneurs—choose to live in the area because of its unrivaled natural surroundings. The military would also lose more than

it would gain from the proposal. New Mexico already has in place a number of airspace agreements for military aircraft training locations, also known as Military Operation Areas, which have been based on positive and mutually beneficial relationships between the military and the public for over 30 years. Reshaping and expanding the existing airspace agreement over the Gila risks jeopardizing the appropriate balance that has been in place for decades.

Throughout the airspace evaluation, I have urged the Air Force to coordinate with local stakeholders and to address community concerns. If the Air Force listens to those who know New Mexico best, I am confident they will reach the same conclusion I have: that an expansion of airspace over the Gila would be a mistake, and that optimizing airspace elsewhere would enable the Air Force to better train its pilots and ensure the positive relationship with the military in New Mexico endures.

This is about striking the right balance. New Mexico has maintained a good working relationship between the military and the surrounding communities for years by listening to community concerns and making smart decisions. Today, that means recognizing that overflights through the Gila are not the right approach. *Editor’s Note: The Board of County Commissioners of Grant County unanimously passed a Resolution on August 16th asking the Air Force to use other areas for training.* 🐾



Senator Martin Heinrich. Photo courtesy of Senator Heinrich’s office.



# The Gila River: A Love Affair in the Land of Enchantment

BY DONNA STEVENS

**W**e're all a little bit in love with rivers. Like a teenage crush, we're first dazzled by their beauty. Soon we crave how they make us feel when we're near them, like the world is new and everything is possible. We hear their songs and fall deeper. We realize that rivers feed us, our bodies and our spirits. As we play and fish in them, our joy mingles with their waters.

When we grow up, we understand that real love means not just taking what we want, but also giving back. We discover that the river needs something from us, and because we're in love, we want to give it, to protect it from harm.

In the early days of this country, there was an expectation that the land and water would always provide for us. To develop and grow, we dammed all the big rivers, and then began to exploit the small ones.

In the 1960s, river lovers began to acknowledge that our nation was just taking from rivers and not taking care. They saw wild rivers disappearing and determined to give back to them in a permanent, protective way. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall (Sen. Tom Udall's father) joined the cause. Together, they persuaded Congress to protect the rivers we love, and in October 1968, President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

As part of this act, eight rivers, including the Rio Grande in northern New Mexico, with its tributary, the Red River, were immediately designated as Wild and Scenic Rivers. Since then, the East Fork of the Jemez River, the Pecos and the Rio Chama in New Mexico have also been protected as Wild and Scenic. Residents enjoy these rivers, and local economies continue to prosper as visitors flock to them, spending their tourist dollars.

Across the nation, more than 12,700 miles of rivers have received Wild and Scenic River status. Sounds impressive, but that number represents less than 1 percent of the total river miles in the country. Now is not the time to rest.

In the Land of Enchantment, there are no protected rivers in the southern part of the state, and not for a lack of deserving river segments. In this arid landscape, rivers and streams are the lifeblood of the land.

The Gila River, with its headwaters in the Gila Wilderness – the nation's first designated wilderness area – is eminently qualified for Wild and Scenic status. The last free-flowing river in the state, the Gila is unmatched for activities like hunting, hiking, fishing and just enjoying the outdoors. Miles downstream of the Gila's three forks – East, West and Middle – is the Gila Middle Box, a tight canyon of towering pink cliffs "boxing in" the river, with flood debris wedged 20 feet overhead, spanning the river.

There are many such wild river segments in the Gila National Forest: the Lower San Francisco, with its soothing hot springs; McKnight Canyon, where the East Fork of the Mimbres is lush and shady; Whitewater Creek above the Catwalk; Black Creek, arising from high headwaters at Reeds Peak in the Aldo Leopold Wilderness.

There's also an intriguing litany of history in the area's stream names: Indian, Mogollon, Diamond, Sapillo, Turkey, Iron, Gilita and Little Creeks – not to mention Holden Prong. These streams feed our imaginations and provide a home to native fish, resident plants and wildlife.

During the 14th Annual Gila River Festival, participants experienced firsthand some of these cool river stretches and saw for themselves why they deserve protection.

Because we love these rivers, we want to keep them as they've always been. This won't just happen on its own. Protection, like love, is an active process. Wild and Scenic River designation means that we keep the river as it is now. Proposed projects that would degrade the river – water quality, wildlife habitat and wild characteristics – would not be allowed.

The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act has three designation categories: wild rivers are rivers, or sections of rivers, that are free-flowing and usually reached by a trail. Scenic rivers are also free-flowing, but accessible by roads in some places. Recreational rivers have easy motorized access and often some development along their shores.

Demands on our rivers will only become greater as the human population grows. Precipitation and water levels may decrease, and new threats are likely to materialize. Just as we safeguard our beloved children and grandchildren against peril, we need to protect our rivers and streams. It's time to move beyond a mere crush, send a valentine to our rivers, declare our undying love and ensure that these rivers get the protection they need and deserve, so future generations can fall in love with them, too.

The annual Gila River Festival featured field trips to some of these river segments. For more information, visit [www.gilariverfestival.org](http://www.gilariverfestival.org). *Donna Stevens is the Executive Director of the Silver City-based Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, [www.ugwa.org](http://www.ugwa.org).*

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Gila River with fog. Photo by: Photo by Jay Hemphill





# AMERICAN OUTDOOR RECREATION



More Americans are directly employed by hunting and fishing:

**483,000**

than oil and gas extraction: **180,000**



## AMERICAN SPENDING (yearly):

CYCLING AND SKATEBOARDING: \$97 BILLION

VIDEO GAMES \$61 BILLION

TRAIL SPORTS GEAR: \$20 BILLION

HOME ENTERTAINMENT: \$18 BILLION

WATER SPORTS GEAR \$14 BILLION

MOVIE TICKETS \$11 BILLION



Outdoor recreation generates enough federal tax revenue to pay the annual wages of an estimated

**1,000,000** registered nurses

**920,000** high school teachers

**1,000,000** firefighters

**1,000,000** kindergarten teachers

**1,000,000** librarians

**1,000,000** police officers



Spending on snow sports results in more American jobs **695,000** than the extractive industries in the United States (**627,000**)



Spending on hunting sustains more American jobs **195,000** than the combined U.S. workforces of Apple (**66,000**) and Microsoft (**64,000**)



More Americans participate in outdoor recreation each year **145 million** than attend NFL, NBA, MLB and NHL games combined (**134 million**)

Source: Outdoor Industry Association



## NEW MEXICO NEEDS AN OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

BY TANIA SOUSSAN

It's no longer any secret that outdoor recreation is a huge economic driver for local communities. Taos and Las Cruces have enjoyed immense benefits from the creation of the Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks national monuments, for example.

In fact, the outdoor recreation industry in New Mexico generates \$9.9 billion in consumer spending a year and supports 99,000 direct jobs, more than twice as many jobs as the energy and mining sectors combined, according to the Outdoor Industry Association. Now, New Mexico has an opportunity to follow the lead of other Western states and up its game by creating a state-level Office of Outdoor Recreation.

Colorado, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Oregon and Montana already have similar government agencies that are promoting outdoor recreation industries and attracting new companies and new jobs.

It's time for New Mexico to do the same, according to the mayors of Farmington, Red River and Mesilla.

"By creating a convergence for the outdoor industry in New Mexico – a single point of contact for resource development and promotion for the sector, as well as support for businesses that thrive on the industry – we know we can help grow our local outdoor recreation jobs and lure more outdoor companies to open shop in New Mexico," they wrote in an op-ed published in the Albuquerque Journal. The city councils of Farmington and Las Cruces both have passed resolutions urging state lawmakers to support legislation and funding to create a New Mexico Office of Outdoor Recreation.

Other local leaders and U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., also endorsed the idea at the New Mexico Outdoor Economics Conference held in Las Cruces in May. The policy conference, co-sponsored by

New Mexico Wild, drew more than 200 people and focused on advancing economic development strategies and opportunities related to protected public lands in the state. "Local economies across New Mexico are tied to our public lands and our heritage of caring for and protecting our land and water," said state Sen. Jeff Steinborn, southern New Mexico director for New Mexico Wild. "We have an opportunity to grow jobs and attract more businesses and tourists. It all starts with a New Mexico Office of Outdoor Recreation, and I expect to see a big push for this from legislators who understand the potential benefits for their communities."

New Mexico certainly has the raw materials to support such an effort. From the sandstone canyons of San Juan County to the whitewater of the Rio Grande Box near Taos to the gypsum dunes of Whites Sands National Monument to the Gila Wilderness near Silver City, the state has plentiful access to public lands and a variety of rich landscapes. Some 65 percent of New Mexicans already are getting outside to camp, hike, bike, fish and more, according to the Outdoor Industry Association.

Some states have created outdoor recreation agencies through legislation, while others such as Colorado have offices created by a governor's executive order. Colorado's focus on recreation helped it to lure the Outdoor Retailer trade show and its \$110 million annual in-state economic impact to Denver.

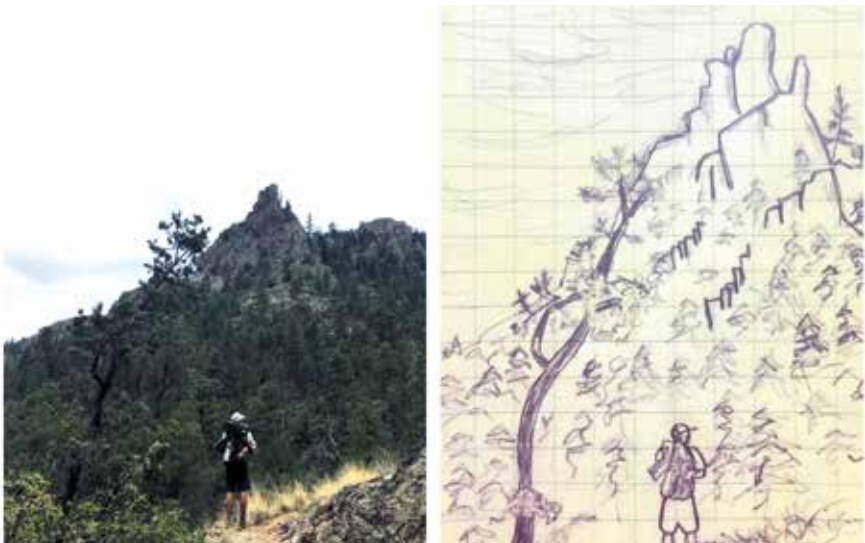
The growing outdoor recreation industry offers New Mexico an opportunity to diversify and strengthen its economy, attracting businesses and creating new jobs. An Office of Outdoor Recreation also could build on brands like New Mexico True and the Land of Enchantment, the mayors of Farmington, Red River and Mesilla wrote in their op-ed. 🌲



# WILDERNESS RANGER HIGHLIGHTS

## Will Ribbens and Andrew Reville 2018 Cibola Wilderness Rangers

The Cibola Wilderness Rangers are chuggin' along, enjoying the sights and heights of our beautiful Wilderness areas. Some of our highlights include monitoring of streams and springs in the Apache Kid Wilderness, an epic 13-mile day hike in the Sandias, and surviving an intense lightning storm in the Manzanos while installing five new Wilderness junction signs. We are looking forward to some upcoming volunteer projects and collaborating with our community to help better our Wilderness areas. We want to give a shout-out to our amazing volunteers who have been so supportive and energetic throughout the season.



Sketches from the trail. Photo by Will Ribbens

## David Greene and Zack Bumgarner Santa Fe West Wilderness Rangers

Both of us came to New Mexico from North Carolina, trading Appalachian soils for red rocks and sagebrush, rich wet coves for open mesas and cardinals for roadrunners. Through this stark change in scenery, we have both learned new ways to love our public lands. While we have enjoyed finding many elusive wildflowers, the highlight of our season thus far has been a mountain lion sighting in the San Pedro Parks Wilderness.

Part of our job as Wilderness Rangers is to conduct a Wilderness-wide invasive plant survey. In doing this, we spend a considerable amount of time off trail. One day, we were several hundred yards from the trail when we came to an aspen grove where the bark of several trees had been scratched to shreds. It turns out that mountain lions have scent glands on their paws and mark their territory this way. After walking in the same direction for a while, we decided to turn around and head back toward the trail. Shortly after that is when we saw her. It was just enough of a glimpse through the aspen to make out a big, golden brown cat with a long tail. She vanished quickly and silently into the woods. The two most alarming things about this sighting were the absolutely silent manner in which she moved and that I only saw her after we had turned around and started walking in the opposite direction. This begs the question: how long had she been following us?



Wilderness Ranger David Greene admiring a wild lily.

## Rhett Spencer and Ben Mortensen Carson Wilderness Rangers

The Carson Rangers were happy to help organize the 4th Annual "Connecting People with Public Lands & Sharing Stewardship of our Historical, Natural Sacred and Special Places" event, a coordinated effort of the USDA Rocky Mountain Research Station, the U.S. Forest Service Questa Ranger District and the New Mexico Wild Wilderness Rangers. This stewardship event in the Taos Ski Valley included 63 youth corps member volunteers and adults. The participants — from several Rocky Mountain Youth Corps crews, the Albuquerque Sign Language Academy youth corps crew, the New Mexico School for the Deaf, the Youth Conservation Corps based out of the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge and the Bosque Ecosystem Monitoring Program — had just spent an entire summer working outdoors on stewardship projects all over New Mexico. They were invited to the Taos Ski Valley to be shown appreciation for their hard work, to celebrate and improve inclusivity in the outdoors and to steward public lands in a weekend of Wilderness education, volunteer project work and distribution of recognition awards.

Throughout the weekend, the volunteers not only learned what federally designated Wilderness is, but also completed or made significant progress toward completing seven projects on the Wheeler Peak and Columbine-Hondo Wilderness areas. These projects ranged from fence building and trail work using crosscut saws to campsite rehabilitation and the installation of Wilderness boundary signs — all focused on instilling pride in the work at hand, as well as connecting the participants to the public lands they were working in!

The attendees were also able to participate in discussions on the future of environmental stewardship focused around the issue of global climate change. These discussions gave youth the opportunity to express their concerns, fears and hopes around a difficult subject and, in return, be genuinely listened to by federal land managers. People as young as 12 described their environmental concerns and how they plan to contribute to a more sustainable future. Their poignant remarks were a clear reminder that there is no age limit on being concerned with inheriting environmental issues or wanting to help fix them. Their goal to create a culture of environmental stewardship amongst their peers gave hope to everyone who participated.

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Wilderness Rangers Rhett Spencer and Ben Mortensen on Lobo Peak. Photo by Ben Mortensen



Rhett Spencer and RMYC Taos Crew 3 on Lobo Peak after working the Yerba Canyon Trail 61 tread. Photo by Rhett Spencer





# CHACO CANYON: AN ANCIENT TREASURE AT RISK

Chaco Canyon National Historic Park. Photo by: Bruce Gordon, courtesy of EcoFlight

Picture yourself standing on the edge of a high, golden mesa, looking down on the ruins of a great city. Chaco Canyon once was home to one of the greatest civilized settlements of its time, a center of culture, religion and commerce. Today it is a sacred and beautiful place of mystery, which has been recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is part of our National Park System. It remains an important cultural icon for the many native peoples with ancestral ties to the region.

You attempt to take in what should be a pervasive silence, broken only by wind sighing through sagebrush and the occasional hawk's cry. You try, but your desire to commune with the peace of Chaco is disrupted by the constant chugging motors of oil derricks. You turn to view the distant horizon, but the sight is marred by the dusty rooster tails of trucks racing between scraped dirt well pads along dirt roads that scar the landscape for miles, leaving a persistent ugly haze.

When the sun sets, Chaco's magic as a center of ancient astronomy should surround you. However, its once-pristine dark night skies are now illuminated by thousands of gas flares and high-intensity sodium lights, scattered across the landscape like a terrible new constellation that mocks the real stars. Due to rampant extractive development on its doorstep, Chaco's night sky will never be truly dark again.

This frightening scenario is could become a reality in the near future if something isn't done to protect the values of this irreplaceable archaeological treasure. Every year, extractive industry moves closer to the borders of Chaco Culture National Historical Park. The area around the park has some of the highest density of oil and gas development in the entire state.

At New Mexico Wild, we picture a different, better future for Chaco Canyon. We believe it must be preserved for future generations as intact as possible, without the degradation that is inevitable whenever

extractive industry runs unchecked. We want to protect Chaco's night skies and ensure that native people will be respected in their desire for this sacred ancestral place to maintain its peace and majesty. We want to see a landscape where wildlife can range safely and undisturbed. And we are not alone in this vision of a better future for Chaco Canyon.

In May, the "Chaco Protection Act" was introduced by Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, both D-N.M. This legislation would create a permanent mineral withdrawal for Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands extending roughly 10 miles beyond Chaco Culture National Historical Park. We are 100 percent supportive of this legislation. Indeed, we have been advocating for such a bill and working toward this for many years. And we are profoundly thankful to Sens. Udall and Heinrich for their leadership.

This bill represents a historic step toward permanently protecting the area's rich cultural heritage, world-class archaeological resources and sensitive natural landscape. New Mexico Wild is proud to stand in solidarity with the All Pueblo Council of Governors (APCG) — representing 20 sovereign Pueblo nations — and

the Navajo Nation supporting this legislation. On May 17, the APCG approved a resolution expressing its "emphatic support" for the Chaco Protection Act.

The resolution stated that "preserving the traditional cultural properties and sacred sites that exist in Chaco Canyon and the Greater Chaco Region, including, but

not limited to, the Chaco Roads, and Pierre's Site, along with protection of the night skies, soundscapes, view sheds, and sight-lines within and surrounding Chaco Canyon is essential to the cultures and traditions of the 20 Pueblos."

The resolution identified the threat, stating, "the Greater Chaco Region has been greatly impacted by oil and gas production that creates environmental degradation and creates human, animal, and plant health issues, and ... oil and gas drilling and related infrastruc-

"Our legislation formalizes that agreement. It is an important piece of a complete solution to protecting the Greater Chaco Landscape. I continue to be grateful to all the New Mexicans raising their voices to protect Chaco's precious and sacred sites. Today's committee action was a positive step forward." —Senator Martin Heinrich





Clockwise from top left: Chaco Monument sign by Joelle Marrier; Chaco Night Sky by John Fowler; Chaco row of dancers by Tisha Broska; Chaco Canyon by Jeff Bandy

ture, including roads and pipelines, in the Greater Chaco Region negatively impact and harm Pueblo traditional cultural properties and sacred sites and impair the cultural landscape(s) that include these traditional cultural properties.”

In August, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee held a hearing to discuss the act. New Mexico Wild submitted testimony, outlining the need for the protection and its significance to the tribes. The core of the testimony follows:

New Mexico Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich introduced S. 2907 to protect the area surrounding Chaco Culture National Historical Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which has been subjected to rampant and increasing oil and gas development for many decades. The areas immediately surrounding the park are some of the only places in the San Juan Basin which remain relatively undeveloped.

The bill would ensure the protection of Chaco ruins and the greater landscape surrounding the Chaco Culture National Historical Park by preventing any future leasing or development of minerals owned by the U.S. government within a ten-mile radius around Chaco. If passed, it would withdraw 316,076 acres of oil, natural gas, coal and other minerals owned by the U.S. Federal Government from future leasing. Existing federal mineral leases as well as existing and future leases of, state, tribal, and allottee minerals would not be impacted by this withdrawal.

Many Chacoan sites exist outside the Park’s official boundaries, so lease sales by BLM in the surrounding area almost always means the loss of artifacts, history, and sacred sites as well as wildlands, habitat and dark skies. This bill represents a major step forward to permanently protecting the area’s rich cultural heritage, world-class archeological resources and sensitive natural landscape.

Chaco is known around the world for its still standing, multi-story buildings and as the nerve center of a culture that spread throughout and dominated the Four Corners area during the 9th, 10th and 11th centuries. This incredible area contains hundreds of miles of roads and a network of villages, shrines and communications sites, many of which are still present on the ground. Fortunately, the lands immediately surrounding Chaco have not yet been intensively leased and drilled, and are some of the last undeveloped lands in the San Juan Basin.

Chaco and its surrounding areas are sacred to both the Navajo Nation and the pueblos of the Southwest. Many Tribes and Pueblos in Northern New Mexico can trace their ancestry and culture to Chaco. The Chaco region holds deep meaning to New Mexico’s Pueblos, whose history and traditional knowledge reside in its thousands of ancestral sites, as well as to the Navajo Nation, whose lands and communities surround much of Chaco Culture National Historical Park. It contains myriad archeological sites, including entire structures from thousands of years ago. It is still used today for religious ceremonies, and also attracts visitors from all over the world, greatly contributing to the local economy.

S. 2907 is supported by the All Pueblo Counsel of Governors and the Navajo Nation and was crafted after significant conversations with tribes, as well as many local and statewide organizations. This legislation reflects hundreds of public comments, and honors New Mexico’s history and culture, recognizing that some places are just too special to lose.

Sen. Heinrich described the significance of the Chaco Protection Act: “The Greater Chaco landscape is incredibly complicated, with state, private, tribal, and individually allotted lands checker-boarded around invaluable cultural resources. For a number of years now, there has been an understanding between the Bureau of Land Management, the industry, local communities, tribes, and historic preservation advocates that no development would happen within 10 miles of the park boundary, in order to minimize impacts on the park, its viewshed, and related cultural resources.

“Our legislation formalizes that agreement. It is an important piece of a complete solution to protecting the Greater Chaco Landscape. I continue to be grateful to all the New Mexicans raising their voices to protect Chaco’s precious and sacred sites. Today’s committee action was a positive step forward.”

What does the future hold for Chaco Canyon? The BLM has been deferring leases in this zone since 2009 in response to pressure from New Mexico Wild and our partners. However, recent directives from the Trump administration are pushing development ever closer to Chaco. Our goal is for the Chaco of tomorrow to be a place where future generations can still experience intact cultural and natural landscapes across the Greater Chaco Region. The Chaco Protection Act is a bold step in the right direction. 🏹



# FEDERAL LEGISLATION ROUNDUP

Ute Mountain. Photo by Steward Wilde

## New Bill Introduced to Enhance and Protect New Mexico's Newest Monuments

**F**ifty-one national monuments designated by executive authority, including Rio Grande del Norte, Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and others threatened by President Trump's national monument review, would be protected under a bill introduced in the House this summer by New Mexico Reps. Michelle Lujan-Grisham and Ben Ray Luján, both D-NM.

Democratic Sens. Tom Udall Martin Heinrich introduced the same update to the 1906 Antiquities Act – named America's Natural Treasures of Immeasurable Quality Unite, Inspire, and Together Improve the Economies of States Act of 2018 – in the Senate in January.

"This bill recognizes and responds to the extreme attacks President Trump has leveled against the nation's bedrock conservation laws, our national monuments and public lands in general," said New Mexico Wild Executive Director Mark Allison. "Congresswoman Lujan-Grisham and Congressman Luján are demonstrating the vision and

leadership to go to bat for New Mexicans and protect the Land of Enchantment. They are doing what we all want the rest of Congress to be doing – offering solutions."

New Mexico Wild has asserted that a president does not have the authority to rescind, harm or amend previous presidential proclamations made under the 1906 Antiquities Act. We have filed an amicus brief in solidarity with the All Pueblo Council of Governors for the Bears Ears National Monument in Utah, which President Trump shrunk by 85 percent in December. We also intend to sue President Trump if the Rio Grande del Norte (RGDN) or Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks (OMDP) national monument is harmed.

The new legislation would expand protections for Bears Ears and would designate more than 249,000 acres of federal public lands within the RGDN and OMDP national monuments as Wilderness.

"These areas have a special place in the hearts

of New Mexicans and this legislation recognizes the desire to keep them wild and free for this and all future generations," Allison said. "New Mexicans are rightly proud of the importance of these areas to our natural and cultural heritage."

Designated in 2013 and 2014 respectively, both RGDN and OMDP enjoy overwhelming community support from diverse coalitions of business owners, sportsmen, tribal leaders, local and elected officials, faith leaders and the general public. During a recent comment period for the Department of Interior national monument review process, New Mexicans submitted the most comments per capita of any state, with nearly 98 percent of the comments on RGDN and 93 percent of the comments on OMDP wanting no changes. New Mexicans support protection of these areas as sources of clean water; areas for traditional practices such as hunting, fishing and ceremonial use; places to recreate; and for the health of New Mexico's economy.

## Cerros del Norte Conservation Act

**I**n April, Democratic U.S. Rep. Ben Ray Luján introduced the Cerros del Norte Conservation Act to provide extra protection for special areas within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument by designating two Wilderness areas – Ute Mountain (Cerro del Yuta) and San Antonio Mountain (Rio San Antonio). Congresswoman Michelle Lujan Grisham co-sponsored the bill.

An identical bill introduced by Senators Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall, both D-N.M., passed the Senate in December 2017. A poll conducted by Third Eye Strategies in 2016 found that 93 percent of registered voters in Taos County say Wilderness is im-

portant to them. Ninety-five percent of those surveyed believe it is important to preserve public lands for future generations.

Designated in 2013, Rio Grande del Norte National Monument northwest of Taos continues to enjoy overwhelming community support, including the backing of business owners, sportsmen, tribal leaders, land grant heirs, local elected officials and grazing permittees.

During last year's review of national monuments ordered by President Trump, New Mexicans submitted the most comments per capita of any state. Nearly 98 percent of the comments received for Rio Grande del Norte

opposed the executive order and wanted the monument to remain as is. Trump has not made a final decision on the status of the monument and it remains in jeopardy. New Mexico Wild remains committed to take legal action if there is any harm done to the monument.

The proposed new Wilderness areas serve as one of the world's great avian migratory routes. They also are home to wildlife, including bear, pronghorn and elk. The legislation would also safeguard world-class recreation opportunities already enjoyed within the national monument, such as hiking, hunting and fishing. The two areas comprise 21,420 acres of the 243,140-acre national monument.

## Roadless Update

**F**or the past 16 years, national forest roadless areas – public lands without roads, logging, mining or other industrial development – have been protected by the U.S. Forest Service's Roadless Area Conservation Rule.

Hailed as one of the smartest and most successful conservation measures in recent history, the Roadless Rule of 2001 protected 58.5 million acres of America's roadless national forests, including 1,597,000 acres in New Mexico. The Roadless Rule was developed with the support

of many diverse stakeholders and involved one of the most extensive public participation efforts in the history of federal rulemaking. More than 1.6 million people commented during the rulemaking process, with 95 percent supporting strong roadless area protection.

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# Sandia

SEASONS OF A MOUNTAIN

Photographs by David Muench

Essay by Ruth Rudner

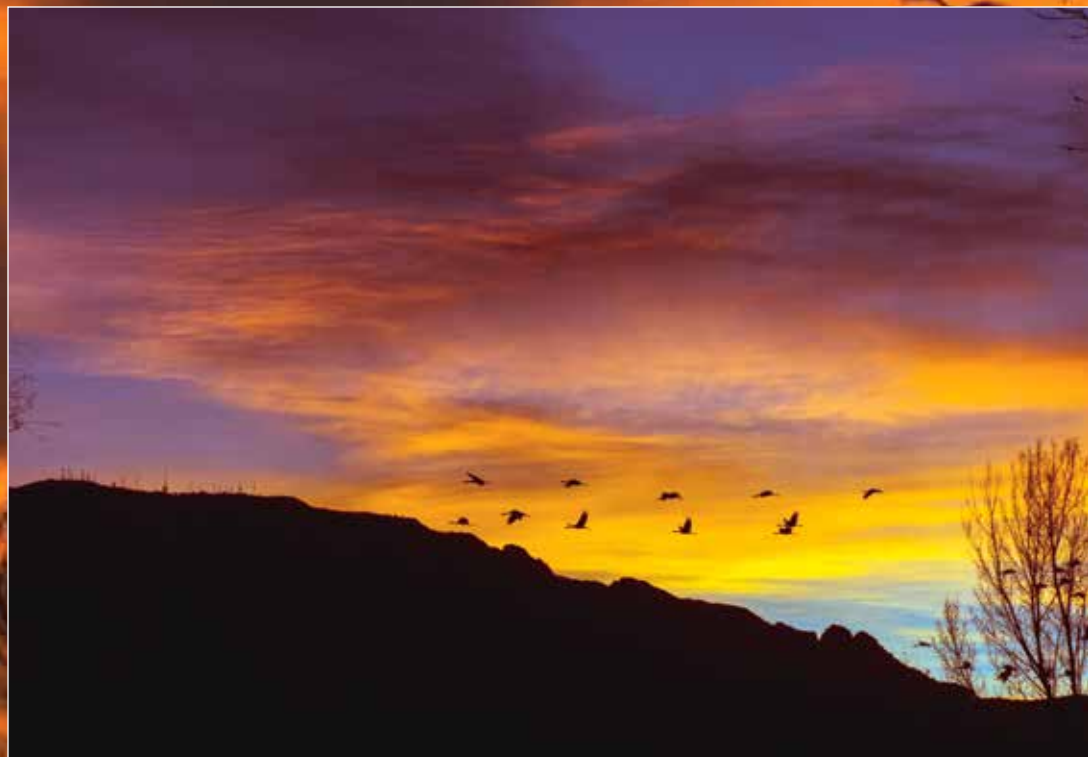


*“All mountains are personal. They belong to the viewer, the hiker, the skier, the climber. The view from my window today and the formation of the Sandias ten million years ago entwine, rendering short the distance from the geological to the personal. Ten million years created the canvas for the sunset panorama I look at a every evening. Watermelon red slides down the steep western face, the color deepening, darkening, disappearing, a fleeting event, ephemeral as all phenomena. Ten million years is short in the age of the earth. During that time the moon, rising above these young mountains has not changed. The mountains have changed, are changing, will, forever, change. For ten million years the sun has risen behind the mountains, moving with the seasons. Ten million years have gone into creating the world where I will hike this weekend. I take it very personally.”*  
—Ruth Rudner

**David Muench** has long been recognized as a master landscape photographer. He has photographed from North America to the ice of Antarctica, the timeless space of Mongolia, the marvels of Iceland, Patagonia, Morocco, Africa, Belarus, New Zealand, and Australia.

**Ruth Rudner** is the author of many books about mountains, from the Alps to the Rockies, two of them collaborations with her husband, David Muench.

The book, a portrait of Sandia, offers a sense of place through the eyes of a photographer and the words of a writer. It has 104 pages; costs \$34.95; is available from both local and online booksellers; and will, of course, be available at Collected Works. Pub date is Oct. 1, 2018.



## Join New Mexico Wild

for a special author event at Collected Works Books in Santa Fe!

David Muench and Ruth Rudner will talk about their new book “Sandia: Seasons of a Mountain”

Sunday, November 25, 11am-12pm  
Collected Works Bookstore & Coffee House  
202 Galisteo St, Santa Fe

Produced by Journey Santa Fe



# WELCOME NEW STAFF!



Suzanne Soto

### Welcome to Suzanne Soto, Office Manager

New Mexico Wild is pleased to welcome Suzanne Soto to the staff of our Albuquerque office. Suzanne was born and raised in Albuquerque. Her love of the outdoors began at a young age and has carried through to adulthood. She enjoys spending her free time connecting with family and friends, and loves living in the southwest. During the summer months, she will find any excuse to get to one of New Mexico's many lakes and rivers. She has a blue heeler mix named Lady Bear, who she refers to as "my little hyena." Suzanne attended UNM's Anderson School of Management and brings to New Mexico Wild a diverse skill set in nonprofit administration and management.



Brian O'Donnell (right) with his wife Melyssa Watson and their daughter Kara.

### Welcome Brian O'Donnell to the Board of Directors

For more than two decades, Brian O'Donnell has been a leading land and wildlife conservationist. Brian works as the director of the Campaign for Nature, an effort to increase global targets for protected areas under the Convention on Biological Diversity. From 2007 through early 2017, Brian worked as the Executive Director of the Conservation Lands Foundation. Brian Led the foundation's efforts to protect, restore, and expand the Bureau of Land Management's National Conservation Lands. At CLF, Brian launched a campaign that protected millions of acres of land as National Monuments. Prior to joining CLF, Brian was the National Public Lands Director for Trout Unlimited (TU). He led TU's efforts to protect National Forest Roadless Areas, permanently protecting more than a million acres in the Wyoming Range, and Oregon's Copper-Salmon Wilderness. Brian also worked for The Wilderness Society where he led campaigns resulting in the congressional designation of the Black Rock Desert and Sloan Canyon National Conservation Areas and dozens of new legislated Wilderness areas throughout Nevada, as well as provided grassroots training in support to New Mexico Wild in our early days.



Ron Brinkley (left), shown at the Wilderness 50 celebration speaking with Garry Oye, former Chief of Wilderness Stewardship Division for the National Park Service.

### A TRIBUTE TO RON BRINKLEY

The New Mexico Wild family lost a long-time staff member and volunteer in August. Ron Brinkley didn't own a car, but instead rode his bike everywhere in town. We are sad to report that Ron was hit by a car while bicycling to work for his job at the Albuquerque Sunport. He worked for New Mexico Wild on weekends, when he would occasionally use the old company Subaru to deliver the New Mexico Wild publication to far corners of the state. Ron was dedicated to protecting the wild, reducing carbon emissions, and connecting people to conservation.

He was one of our most dedicated volunteers in planning and implementing the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Conference in Albuquerque. Ron single-handedly organized the Wilderness50 People's Gala Film Festival, a Wilderness Encampment exhibit, and a Wilderness display at the Albuquerque Sunport. He contributed thousands of hours for Wilderness preservation and education. We are all better off for his contributions, his sense of humor and for his kindness.


The local community is working on a Ghost Bike to honor Ron's life. We know Ron would want some nice stickers on the bike, so keep an eye out for the Ghost Bike with the Wolves Belong sticker.





# WILDERNESS FAQs





Pecos Wilderness boundary sign. Photo: Vincent Franzen, [www.ultrazona.com](http://www.ultrazona.com)


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


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


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


 **HOW MUCH WILDERNESS EXISTS IN NEW MEXICO?**  
Approximately 1,695,598 acres are protected as Wilderness in the state. Though this seems like a lot, New Mexico actually ranks next to last among Western states in the percentage of its land designated as Wilderness, at roughly 2 percent. On average, Western states (not including Alaska) have 5 percent of their land designated as Wilderness.


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


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


 **CAN I HUNT AND FISH IN A WILDERNESS AREA?**  
Hunting and fishing are allowed in Wilderness areas, subject to applicable state and federal laws.


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


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

 **CAN I BIKE IN A WILDERNESS AREA?**  
The 1964 Wilderness Act prohibits motorized or mechanized forms of recreation, and this includes bicycles. Instead, visitors are required to walk or ride horseback.

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

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

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

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



Becky Fitzpatrick and Ezra Sage  
Pecos Wilderness Rangers

Here on the Pecos, we had a late start due to a fire closure and a slow start to the monsoon season. Once the forest opened, we hit the ground running! Based out of the Pecos Ranger Station, we have completed about 150 miles of trail surveys for invasive plant species, trail conditions and campsites. The landscape is beautiful, vast and inspiring, and we can't wait to continue to explore the Wilderness ecosystem.

Wilderness Ranger Ezra Sage makes friends with a horned lizard. Right: Becky Fitzpatrick working on the trail.  
Photo by Ezra Sage



Thank You Community Partners!

USDA  
Forest Service  
Southwestern  
Region



Santa Fe Garden Club





April Fuentes and Atieno Ouma  
Lincoln Wilderness Rangers

Greetings from the Lincoln National Forest Wilderness Rangers! We have been able to cover great ground in the White Mountains and are hoping to be able to complete it by the end of the month to head over to the Capitan. It has been nothing but an honor to be working out of the Smokey Bear Ranger District. Yes, indeed, this is the forest that Smokey Bear was rescued from. Unfortunately, we have not seen his cousins but have spotted fresh scat (bear poop) as well as lots of prints.



In terms of wildlife , we see lots of horny toads, deer and elk. This season, we have been very successful with taking volunteers out into the Wilderness to assist with trail monitoring, invasive species collection and campsite monitoring. We are also one of the two Wildernesses that are using a citizen science application that was developed to give everyone a chance to gather invasive thistle.

Our highlights for this season consist of meeting with the district botanist and learning about different plants, using crosscut saws to clear downed trees with the Smokey Bear Trail Crew, and dancing on top of ridges to celebrate long days. We have also been caught in numerous thunder and lightning storms and are pros at staying safe! If you are ever in Ruidoso, please do not hesitate to come. 🏔️



Left: April and Atieno on Nogal Peak. Photo by April Fuente;. Right: Wilderness Ranger Atieno Ouma (right) puts her back into boulder removal. Photo by April Fuentes

Federal Legislation Roundup continued from page 14

The Trump administration and Congress have launched the largest rollback of public lands conservation in American history. This includes attacks on the Roadless Rule and the commonsense protections it provides for our nation’s forests. There are several bills in Congress that, if passed, would allow road building and logging in national forest roadless areas. Companion bills in the House and Senate would allow road building in roadless areas for mining.

In August, Washington state’s Democratic U.S. Sens. Patty Murray and Maria Cantwell, the top Democrat on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, introduced legislation (the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2018) to permanently protect the nation’s most pristine federal forests from harmful and reckless development. These federal lands support billions of dollars each year in revenues from outdoor recreation, provide opportunities for hunting and fishing, protect critical habitat for 1,600 threatened or endangered species, and supply clean drinking water to millions of Americans in more than 350 communities across the United States.

Fifteen other senators have co-sponsored the legislation, including Martin Heinrich and Tom Udall, both New Mexico Democrats. The Roadless Conservation Act of 2018 would:

- Protect, in perpetuity, 58.5 million acres of roadless national forest in 39 states.
- Ensure that the more than 240 million people living within 100 miles of a national forest or national grassland retain access to opportunities for outdoor recreation, including hiking, camping, hunting, fishing, mountain biking and backcountry skiing.

- Safeguard watersheds in national forests and roadless areas that provide clean drinking water for over 60 million Americans.
- Save taxpayers millions of dollars by limiting costly new road building, allow the Forest Service to focus on maintaining its existing 371,581-mile network of national forest system roads, and reduce its \$3 billion backlog of deferred maintenance on its existing road system.
- Maintain exemptions for hydropower development, public safety and firefighting needs.
- Uphold the 9th and 10th U.S. Circuit Courts of Appeals decisions, as well as a decision by the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, in support of the Roadless Rule.

Sixteen years ago, New Mexico Wild and millions of people across the country rallied to create the Roadless Rule and protect our forests. Now, we must come together once again to defend and protect these places from logging, mining and development. There are many easy ways you can help to protect our forests:

- Contact your senator or representative and tell them you support our wild forests and the exceptional recreation opportunities and habitat they provide.
- Write and submit a letter to the editor to your local newspaper voicing your support for the Roadless Rule and the Roadless Area Conservation Act of 2018.
- Educate your friends and family about this issue using social media to share information about the value of our national forests. 🏔️





Heart of the Gila. Photo courtesy of Heart of the Gila

Wild and Scenic Rivers are some of the most beautiful, valuable and unspoiled environments left in the United States.

Did You Know:

- Less than one quarter of 1 percent of U.S. rivers are protected as National Wild & Scenic Rivers.
- 208 rivers totaling 12,709 miles are protected as Wild and Scenic out of 2.9 million miles of rivers across the United States.
- 600,000 miles of river are blocked by dams in the U.S. \*Statistics from the National Wild & Scenic River System
- In the days of fur trappers and pioneers, free-flowing rivers were the lifeblood of commerce, transportation and fisheries across America. Today, they are critical yet often-overlooked sources of clean water, critical habitat and rejuvenating recreation for Americans seeking to reconnect with the deep flow of time and nature.
- Congress passed the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act on Oct. 2, 1968, to preserve selected rivers with outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values in a free-flowing condition for the enjoyment of present and future generations.
- The landmark legislation safeguards the free-flowing character of rivers by precluding them from being dammed, while allowing for the public to enjoy them. It encourages river management that crosses political boundaries and promotes public participation to develop goals for protecting streams.
- Rivers are designated according to three classifications:
  1. Wild Rivers – Rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines essentially primitive and waters unpolluted. These represent vestiges of primitive America.
  2. Scenic Rivers – Rivers or sections that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.
  3. Recreational Rivers – Rivers or sections that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

Key Facts:

1. Designation as a Wild & Scenic River does not prohibit development or give the federal government control over private property. Recreation, agricultural practices, residential development and other uses can continue.
2. Rivers or sections of rivers that are designated as “Wild,” “Scenic” or “Recreational” are protected through voluntary stewardship by landowners and river users and through regulation and programs of federal, state, local or tribal governments.
3. Not all land within the boundaries of designated rivers is, or will be, publicly owned, and the act limits how much land the federal government can acquire from willing sellers.
4. The act strives to balance dam and other construction at appropriate sections of rivers with permanent protection for some of the country’s most outstanding free-flowing rivers. To accomplish this, it prohibits federal support for actions such as the construction of dams or other in-stream activities that would harm the river’s free-flowing condition, water quality or “outstandingly remarkable” resource values.
5. Designation does not affect existing water rights or the existing jurisdiction of states and the federal government over waters as determined by established principles of law. 🏞️




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



**nusenda.org**

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



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

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

**Some common problems are:**

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

**To report a violation, please visit [nmwild.org/violation](https://nmwild.org/violation). Thanks for helping us keep the Wild West wild!**



New Mexico Wild had its float at the annual Albuquerque Pride Parade, featuring our lobo mascot.



Photo by Evan Gonzales



## Get your New Mexico Wild hat!

Order online at [nmwild.org/shop](http://nmwild.org/shop)



New Styles! Knit Beanies!  
Boonie Bucket Hats!

## Get your New Mexico Wild Shirt!

Order online for \$20 at [nmwild.org/shop](http://nmwild.org/shop)



Full color logo on front, heather gray shirt, with  
"Keep It Wild!" printed in black on the back.



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

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

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







Organ Mountain reflection. Photo courtesy of Monuments to Mainstreet

Trail Alliance, Mesilla Valley Audubon Society and local company Southwest Expeditions.

Jeff Steinborn, southern New Mexico director for New Mexico Wild, said the city of Las Cruces was an integral part of the event, with Visit Las Cruces promoting activities and helping with the kick-off celebration.

“In addition to promoting our national monuments, the city has also recently made ‘outdoor recreation’ a targeted sector in its economic development and tourism efforts,” he said. “We are actively working together to grow our outdoor recreation economy and celebrate the importance of protected public lands.”

In addition to benefiting the community and visitors, M2M supports local organizations and businesses. Southwest Expeditions is a small outfitting company working to establish tours in and around the region’s national monuments and historic areas. Being part of the umbrella of activities taking part during Monuments to Main Street put the company in front of a new audience and supports an emerging local outdoor economy.

“When they protected the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument and said it would benefit small businesses, we thought, that’s great, but how do we build a local network to effectively advertise our product?” said Dave Crider, general manager of Southwest Expeditions. “By working together to build and promote exciting new tours, M2M has helped create a wonderful launch to our business and provide opportunities for visitors to tour the world-class public lands and historic sites within our region. Southwest Expeditions is now opening a retail storefront location in downtown Las Cruces.”

In this third year, M2M had even more tour opportunities to unique monument locations, including a bikepacking campout, a Panoramic Peaks tour in the Sierra de las Uvas, a Picacho Peak hike and a tour of Slot Canyon, along with returning favorites such as the Old West stagecoach ride, aerial tours of the Mesilla Valley and World War II bombardier training sites, and river rafting excursions.

M2M also offered more relaxed activities such as the Wild & Scenic Film Festival at the Rio Grande Theatre, hosted by the Friends of the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks, and Pops Under the Stars performed by the Las Cruces Symphony.

Nature was celebrated in the visual arts, too. An exhibit of works created by the Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument artists in residence was displayed at the Southwest Environmental Center, and there was a Plein Air Fest where painters created art outdoors.

These are just some of the dozens of activities that took place in September. Monuments to Main Street grew in its third year and promises to expand its reach again in 2019, helping more people experience the many historical, cultural and natural places and events that make our part of southern New Mexico unique and worth preserving. In addition to providing recreation and education opportunities, many of the events held in September had a positive economic impact on small local businesses from outdoor recreation to tourism. Remember, though, you don’t have to wait until next September to explore our many local treasures. ▲

# Looking to volunteer in wilderness?

Check out our website at [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org) for upcoming volunteer service projects.



Photos: Mark Allison

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




PHOTO: MIKE GROVES, ORGAN MOUNTAINS, NM

- Your monthly donation helps us keep working all year long.
- Your credit card is automatically billed each month, nothing to remember or mail.
- You set your donation amount—as little as \$10 a month makes a difference!
- Change your donation amount or cancel at any time.
- Your membership in New Mexico Wild never expires—you are renewed automatically.
- Monthly donating saves administrative time and paper.
- Donate at a level of \$20 or more monthly to receive free gifts.
- As a Wild One monthly donor, you are the backbone of our membership!

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

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



**New Mexico Wild is the premier wilderness organization in New Mexico. Become a Wild One! Sign up at [www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org)**





# If you...

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



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

### You can help keep New Mexico Wild!

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

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



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

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

**[www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org)**

### New Mexico WILD

**I want to join the Wild Ones as a monthly donor.**  
**Bill my credit card for the amount selected below.**

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

Gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated!

#### I want to give a single gift:

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

### Yes! I want to support Wilderness in New Mexico

**Join at a higher level and enjoy these great gifts!**

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

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

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

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

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

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

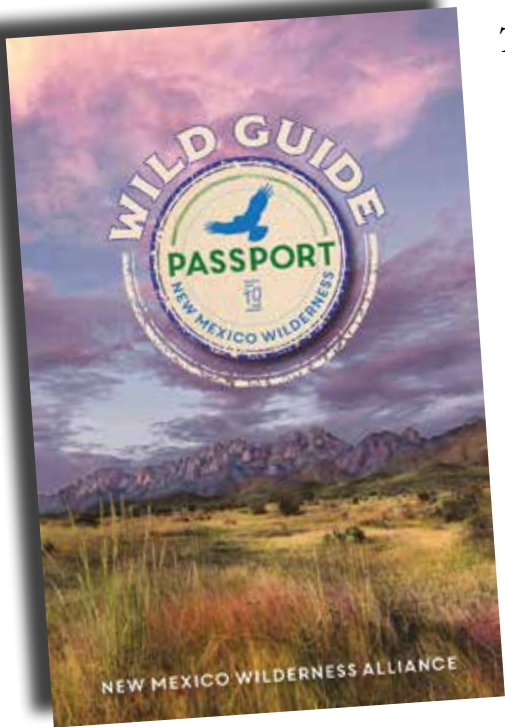
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# If You Love Wilderness, You Need This Book!

## WILD GUIDE: Passport to New Mexico Wilderness!



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

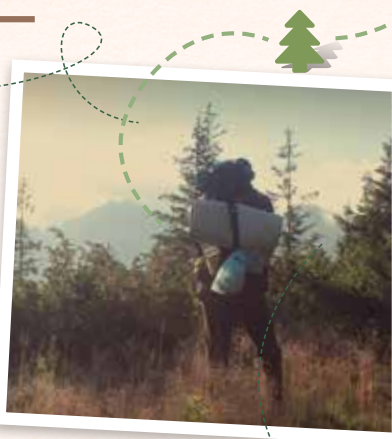
## NEW MEXICO WILD

### Annual Raffle Trip

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Buy your tickets online at  
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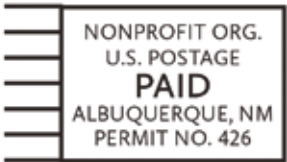


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Mexican Gray Wolves. Photo by Don Burkett,  
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