

Spring/Summer 2017

# New Mexico WILD!

The Semiannual Publication of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance



**NEW MEXICO  
WILD**  
20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

**Celebrating  
20 Years of  
Wilderness  
Advocacy**



**Public  
Lands  
Under  
Threat**





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**VOLUME 14, NUMBER 1**  
**SPRING/SUMMER 2017**

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ABOVE: This April, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance staff and volunteers helped a Pecos Acequia parciante (or water rights holder) clean his section of the ditch that feeds 31 parciantes with water from the Pecos River. Photo: Bernard Tibbetts  
COVER: Art by Kelli Berghold and Lois Manno. Inset photo of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument by David Muench.

# RUN FOR THE HILLS!

By Mark Allison, Executive Director



In an essay published in the posthumous book “Round River,” Aldo Leopold noted that, “Conservation is a bird that flies faster than the shot we aim at it. ... Our target, then, is a receding one. The task grows greater year by year, but so does its importance.” With apologies to my birding friends, this has never been more true. What we aim to protect – and how we mean to protect it – is of course influenced mightily by our elected officials and decision-makers.

Celebrating our 20th anniversary this year, we were chomping at the bit to follow up on the recent successes of land conservation in New Mexico to protect even more of the state’s few remaining wild places. Next year, for example, will be the 50th anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. What would be a more fitting tribute than to have one of the Southwest’s last free-flowing rivers, the perpetually threatened Gila River, permanently protected by Wild and Scenic designation?

Instead, we find ourselves facing a drastically hostile and changed political climate. (Makes me want to be a political climate change denier.) Make no mistake, the threats to our bedrock conservation and environmental consensus of the last hundred years are real and imminent. It would be difficult to exaggerate the volume and significance of the attacks we are confronting in the first days of this administration. Virtually everything imaginable – the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, efforts to combat climate change, the very agencies and departments created to protect us from toxic smog and poisoned water, even the idea of science itself – is under assault.

Efforts are underway to de-designate our national monuments, neuter the Antiquities Act, undermine the Wilderness Act and sell off Americans’ birthright of our public lands. These proposals are no longer coming just from lunatic fringe militia or industry front groups, but from the federal government itself.

Led by Republican Rep. Rob Bishop of Utah, chairman of the House Committee on Natural Resources, (joined by Republican New Mexico Rep. Steve Pearce), the 115th Congress is at least as frightening as the administration. In fact, President Trump was the only Republican running for his party’s nomination for president who *didn’t* support ceding public lands to the states. Trump’s pick for secretary of the Interior, Ryan Zinke, as appalling as his positions are in nearly all other matters, famously resigned as a delegate to the 2016 Republican nominating convention over the party platform committee’s plank to “immediately pass universal legislation ... requiring the federal government to convey certain federally controlled public lands to (the) states.”

In the perversity of politics, at least on the public land seizure issue, our success may hinge on having an increasingly erratic, profoundly unwell, pathological liar as our backstop to keep public lands in public hands. Whether that is a Russian Da or Nyet remains to be seen.

But this missive isn’t intended to bash Republicans or Trump voters – far from it. For much of our nation’s history, the environmental legislation now under attack was championed by both parties. Certainly, the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance’s founding members 20 years ago were Republicans and Democrats alike.

I doubt very much that those who voted for Donald Trump did so because they thought he would be hell bent on ravaging our land, air and water like there’s no tomorrow. Whatever the reasons people voted for Trump, destroying the planet was not high on the list of campaign issues discussed. A recent public opinion poll by Hart Research Associates of voters in the 2016 presidential election found that nearly two-thirds of those who voted for Trump *oppose* the idea of privatizing or selling off America’s national forests and public lands. A recent Reuters/Ipsos poll showed that only 22 percent of Americans want to see more drilling and coal mining on U.S. federal lands.

It’s disheartening, though, to hear the old arguments and false choices from the last century being trotted out to pit responsible and commonsense environmental protections against economic development and jobs. The irony, of course, is that the vast majority of our national public lands are already open to extractive industry. In New Mexico, for example, 88 percent of Bureau of Land Management land is already open to oil and gas leasing development. In contrast, only 2 percent of New Mexico is protected as Wilderness.

The outdoor recreation industry is one of the largest sources of economic growth in New Mexico, directly supporting 68,000 jobs, providing more than \$450 million in tax revenue and \$6.1 billion (yes, billion) in consumer spending annually. I hope the Trump administration will pragmatically see that tourism and outdoor recreation are

# RUN FOR THE HILLS!



huge economic drivers for local communities and that diversification from fossil fuel development is good business.

And while this is a qualitatively different administration, profoundly unlike any that has come before it, this isn't the first time we've had to play defense. You'll see in the following pages a look back at previous administrations that were aligned with corporate interests and extractive industries and the hard-won lessons we learned. This isn't our first rodeo.

In the biography of Frank Church ("Fighting the Odds, The Life of Senator Frank Church"), authors LeRoy Ashby and Rod Gramer wrote that after President Nixon nominated Walter J. Hickel as secretary of the Interior, "an extremely controversial nominee ... (with) a speculator's mentality," Church referenced the famous Ed Abbey quote that, "Wilderness needs no defense – it needs more defenders." The authors went on to note, "But defenders, as Church realized, also needed a strategy. And, as usual, the senator had a plan. ..." In his continuing efforts to protect the River of No Return Wilderness, Church introduced multiple bills to both buy time and so that he didn't set himself up as a "stationary target for his opponents."

Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, both D-N.M., know that sometimes a good offense is the best defense, and I couldn't be prouder that they've already re-introduced their bill this Congress to protect Wilderness areas within the Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks national monuments.

We, too, have a strategy at New Mexico Wild.

We will be in a defensive posture for at least the next four years (though we will play some offense when we can to prevent providing a stationary target). While we will certainly employ legal strategies and work with our congressional delegation to fight threats to our public lands, the best way forward is to expand, diversify and engage support so that our grassroots organizing can become even more robust. Finding common ground to cultivate and mobilize public land champions and coming together in creative ways will be critical to our chances of successfully resisting, combating and stalling the hostile agenda of the Trump administration and the 115th Congress. We know how powerful this can be.

Writing in December about our public lands – and Wilderness in particular – as a safeguard in the age of Trump, journalist Jimmy Tobias noted, "Open land and liberty have always been bedfellows. Many leading wilderness advocates of the past – people like Edward Abbey and Bob Marshall (and Sen. Church) were also exuberant civil liberties enthusiasts.... It's a time for civil libertarians and public land enthusiasts to recognize and revive their old alliance. Together (for example) they could resist attempts to sacrifice conservation law and constitutional freedoms on the altar of border security."

He praised New Mexico Wild friend Terry Tempest Williams' book "The Open Space of Democracy," which discusses responsive citizenship, community engagement and authentic patriotism. Tobias concluded, "The open space of democracy is our public lands. We'll need them more than ever in the years ahead."

The energy industry alone spends \$300 million a year lobbying Congress – three lobbyists for each member. That doesn't include the additional enormous sums of campaign contributions. While our organization doesn't have those kinds of resources, we do have the power that comes from the moral authority of people speaking with a collective voice.

Our democratic values, traditions and institutions are under assault in an exhausting barrage. For this reason, there's never been a better time, a more urgent time than now to become engaged. I promise you, helping defend our public lands – yours and mine – will make you feel better.

So absolutely, run for the hills. But come back and help us defend them. They need all the defenders they can get, and they need you right now.

*"Democratic civilization has turned out to be even more fragile than we imagined; the resources of civil society have turned out to be even deeper than we know. The battle between these two shaping forces – between the axman assaulting the old growth and the still firm soil and deep roots that support the tree of liberty – will now shape the future of us all."* – Adam Gopnik, *The New Yorker*, Feb. 20, 2017. 🌲

Mark Allison, Executive Director

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### MISSION STATEMENT

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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# NM NATIONAL FOREST UPDATES

## Revised Forest Plans Discount Wilderness

By Judy Calman, Staff

Wilderness appears to be taking a backseat as the Cibola, Carson and Santa Fe national forests update their forest plans.

Forest plans, the bird’s-eye-view documents that guide forest decisions, must be revised every 15 to 20 years to address such things as which areas of the forest will be open to energy development and how the forest will manage habitat for endangered species. As part of the planning process, each forest also must inventory its lands for Wilderness characteristics and decide whether to manage those areas for preservation and possible Wilderness designation by Congress.

All five forests in New Mexico are currently undergoing plan revision. We advocate strongly for robust Wilderness inventories and preservation and often submit our own on-the-ground data collection as well. We have found that every forest could be doing a better job both at identifying areas which have Wilderness characteristics according to their own regulations and at making decisions to protect those areas.

In each of the inventories that have so far been released to the public in at least draft form (the Cibola, Carson and Santa Fe), we have been concerned at an apparent pattern

of finding reasons to exclude areas from the Wilderness inventory, rather than to include them. This pattern includes making decisions about boundaries which run counter to Forest Service guidance or excluding units based on local political concerns, rather than based on scientific data. We also continue to experience the agency making excuses for Wilderness at public meetings (“We’re only doing this inventory because it’s required by law.”) rather than explaining to the public why Wilderness can be good (and sometimes critical) for ecosystems. In some forests, these mistakes have resulted in an inventory which is completely unacceptable, while other forests could merely use small improvements. Across the state, however, it is clear that the agency has some misunderstandings about how to apply its own regulations.

### What you can do:

The best thing you can do to help us combat this issue is to show up at the public meetings held by the Forest Service and submit comments to the agency during its comment periods, especially if one of these places is special to you. We are expecting more public meetings within the next six months for the Cibola, Carson, Gila and Santa Fe national forests, and we will con-



Young hikers tackle a trail in the Pecos Mountains of the Santa Fe National Forest. Photo: Tisha Broska

tinue to announce those schedules through our enews and Action Alerts. If you care about our national forests, make sure you are on our e-mail list. 📧

## NEW MEXICO WILD PRIORITY AREAS

### WHAT WE’RE FIGHTING FOR

- Protection of public lands against threats, including efforts to seize public lands and de-designate or otherwise harm national monuments
- Legislation to establish Wilderness within the Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks national monuments
- Mexican gray wolf recovery
- A comprehensive vision for the Gila area, including Wilderness and other permanent protections, Wild and Scenic River legislation and no diversion of the Gila River
- Protection of Chaco Canyon from oil and gas leasing
- Ah-shi-sle-pah/Bisti Wilderness expansion legislation
- Administrative protections via the Forest Service Management Planning processes for the Gila, Cibola, Carson, Santa Fe and Lincoln national forests
- Administrative protections via the Carlsbad, Tri-County and Farmington Bureau of Land Management Resource Management Plans for BLM lands
- Protection of roadless areas around the Pecos Wilderness
- Mineral withdrawal for Otero Mesa
- Oversight of federal land management agencies, including geothermal development, illegal cattle grazing, off-road vehicle use, tree cutting, road building, invasive species and oil and gas leasing

### HOW WE’RE DOING IT

- Areas identified for greater emphasis considering the outcome of the 2016 general election include:
- Defense and rapid response to emerging threats, remaining nimble to respond to attacks
  - Build a base of support – members, supporters, allies and fundraising
  - Recruit, diversify and engage a community of supporters
  - Seek new opportunities with a more conservation-oriented New Mexico House and Senate
  - Legal actions and strategies
  - Direct nonviolent actions and protests
  - More stewardship outings and volunteer service projects on public lands
  - Formal partnerships with agencies regarding public lands monitoring and stewardship
  - Increased organizational name recognition and media presence as a public lands leader and defender
  - Support U.S. Senate allies regarding procedural strategies for delaying and stopping harmful legislation, rules and policies
  - Continue place-based campaigns and community organizing to be prepared to seize on political opportunities



# 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.



# New Mexico Wild Celebrates 20th Anniversary

## Highlights of 20 years working for New Mexico's wilderness, wildlife and water.



Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument tree planting. Photo: O'Donnell

**Spring 1997** – New Mexico Wilderness Alliance (New Mexico Wild) established.

**1998** – First staff hired.

**March 1998** – First Mexican gray wolves reintroduced into the Blue Range Recovery Area.

**March 1999** – Began Citizen's Wilderness Inventory Project to survey every remaining wild area in New Mexico to determine if it should be included in new Wilderness proposal.

**1999** – Organized public comment letters to save Bisti/De-Na-Zin Wilderness in northern New Mexico from oil and gas development.

**May 1999** – First ever Wilderness Activist Workshop drew over 150 participants.

**1999** – President Clinton announced the Roadless Area Conservation Rule to protect undesignated wilderness in national forests across the country.

**1999** – Then-Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M., endorsed New Mexico Wild's plans to protect more areas as Wilderness.

**June 2000** – Organized members to attend public meetings throughout the state to support reintroduction of wolves to the Gila Wilderness.

**January 2000** – Bisti Wilderness saved thanks to dedication and savvy organizing efforts of New Mexico Wild.

**Spring 2000** – Multimedia slideshow featuring star-studded soundtrack of New Mexicans went on tour.

**January 2001** – New Mexico Wild began to work with BLM to regulate irresponsible off-road vehicle use and make recommendations for a Transportation Plan to protect areas being considered for Wilderness designation.

**Summer 2002** – Completed inventory of BLM lands for Wilderness, proposing over 3.5 million acres throughout the state.

**2002** – Launched fight to protect Otero Mesa – New Mexico's largest and wildest remnant Chihuahuan Desert grasslands – from oil and gas drilling.

**September 2002** – Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Greater Otero Mesa–Crow Flats Region completed.

**January 2003** – Robledos-Las Uvas Citizens' Wilderness Proposal for Doña Ana County introduced.

**July 2003** – Secured endorsements for Ojito Wilderness from the governor, state land commissioner, Sandoval and Bernalillo counties and Albuquerque City Council. Udall moved forward to make Wilderness proposal a reality.

**January 2004** – At our public forum, Gov. Bill Richardson signed executive order directing state agencies to protect Otero Mesa.

**February 2004** – First Wilderness legislation for New Mexico in over 15 years – Ojito Wilderness Act – introduced in Congress with bipartisan support.

**July 2004** – Bush administration released plan to repeal Roadless Area Conservation Rule, putting 58.5 million acres of national forests at risk of destructive road building, logging and drilling. New Mexico Wild worked with coalition of organizations and businesses to protect over 1.6 million acres in New Mexico.

**March 2005** – Launched campaign to protect pristine Valle Vidal from coal-bed methane development.

**April 2005** – University of New Mexico chapter of New Mexico Wild established.

**May 2005** – Started working with BLM's Resource Management Planning process for Doña Ana, Otero and Sierra counties. Long-term process can protect Wilderness-quality lands for decades, until permanent protections are possible.

**July 2005** – New Mexico Wild Otero Mesa National Tour visited seven Eastern states.

**October 2005** – Ojito Wilderness Act signed by President Bush.



Valles Caldera fence removal service project. Photo: Raymond Watt

**December 2005** – State Water Quality Control Commission voted to protect Valle Vidal's streams and lakes as Outstanding National Resource Waters under federal Clean Water Act.

**January 2006** – Doña Ana Wild! campaign launched to protect approximately 330,000 acres of potential Wilderness in Las Cruces area.

**April 2006** – Launched campaign to protect national park and national monument lands in or adjacent to Chaco Canyon, El Malpais, White Sands, Bandelier, Carlsbad Caverns, Guadalupe Mountains and Big Bend by managing as Wilderness.

**April 2006** – Doña Ana County Commission, Las Cruces City Council and communities of Sunland Park, Mesilla and Hatch passed resolutions in favor of our Doña Ana Wild! proposal.

**March 2007** – Moratorium secured on new drilling or leasing in Otero Mesa to allow water resources to be studied by U.S. Geological Survey.

**March 2007** – Launched Rio Grande del Norte campaign to protect 303,000 acres of BLM land around Ute Mountain and Rio Grande Gorge as Wilderness and national conservation area.

**January 2007** – Began working on the National Forest Travel Management Plans to keep off-road vehicles out of roadless areas.

**June 2008** – Land Grant of San Antonio del Rio Colorado signed resolution supporting Rio Grande del Norte proposal.

**2008** – Began campaign to reform the 1872 Mining Law.

**2009** – Launched campaign to permanently protect 120,000 acres adjacent to Pecos Wilderness.

**March 2009** – Sabinoso Wilderness signed into law by President Obama.

**April 2009** – Sen. Jeff Bingaman, D-N.M., introduced El Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area legislation (co-sponsored by Sen. Tom Udall).

**April 2009** – U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled on litigation brought by New Mexico Wild, state of New Mexico and others challenging BLM Resource Management Plan amendment for Otero and Sierra counties. Court recognized ecological importance of Otero Mesa, found amendment did not adequately consider potential impacts of oil and gas development.

**February 2010** – Sen. Bingaman held hearing in Las Cruces on draft legislation proposing 259,000 acres of Wilderness and 162,000 acres of national conservation area in Doña Ana County. Supportive crowd of 500 attended.

**May 2010** – Rep. Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., introduced legislation for Rio Grande del Norte National Conservation Area and Wilderness (co-sponsored by then-Rep. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M.).

*Continued on page 7*





# Never Let a Good Crisis Go to Waste

By Edward Sullivan, Lifetime Member and Founding Executive Director

Eighteen months after I started as executive director of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance in 1999, George W. Bush was elected president. Surely, we thought, this was the worst possible scenario for Wilderness protection: an anti-environmental executive branch and House and a 50-50 split Senate. How would we get anything done?

But then something magical happened.

Seeing the advances we'd made under the Clinton administration – including the national forest roadless rule and various na-

tional monuments – come under threat, our base of support grew and became extremely mobilized. Membership numbers went up. Volunteerism went up. Attendance on survey weekends went up. And donations poured in.

The moral of the story? Never let a good crisis go to waste.

The next four years are an incredible opportunity for us to deepen our commitment to Wilderness protection. With such an obvious (and oblivious) common enemy, it's time for us to circle the wagons and get ready to fight.

That's why I'm challenging everyone to double down on their commitment to New Mexico Wild this year. I'm making an additional \$500 donation to send a message to this administration that their anti-environmental rhetoric only makes us stronger. I hope you'll join me.

*Editor's Note: Thanks Edward!*

*Edward Sullivan served as executive director from 1999 to 2002. After leaving New Mexico Wild he worked for pro-environmental and pro-democracy candidates around the world alongside Democratic Party strategist James Carville. He now resides in New York City, working as an executive coach helping the next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs build companies that will change the world. Please say hello at [edward@gainvelocity.co](mailto:edward@gainvelocity.co).*

## 20TH ANNIVERSARY, continued



Sabinoso Wilderness expansion service project. Photo: Tisha Broska

**September 2010** – Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks Wilderness Act introduced by Sen. Bingaman, calling for protections totaling 402,000 acres in Doña Ana County.

**October 2010** – Gov. Richardson asked President Obama to create a national monument for Otero Mesa.

**July 2011** –State of New Mexico approved permit for Geovic to begin conducting exploratory drilling on Wind Mountain, the most iconic peak in Otero Mesa.

**August 2011** – New Mexico Wild launched proposal for Organ Mountains–Desert Peaks National Monument.

**January 2012** – New Mexico Wild launched national monument proposal for Rio Grande del Norte.

**January 2013** – Taos Pueblo signed resolution supporting national conservation area or national monument designation for Rio Grande del Norte and Wilderness designation for Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio.

**January 2013** – Sens. Martin Heinrich and Udall reintroduced Sen. Bingaman's Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness bill, congruent with national monument campaign.

**February 2013** – Sens. Martin Heinrich and Udall and Rep. Luján reintroduced Río Grande del Norte Conservation Area legislation.

**March 2013** – Rio Grande del Norte National Monument established by President Obama.

**May 2013** – Lawsuit filed to challenge U.S. Department of Justice McKittrick policy that makes it harder to prosecute wolf killings.

**December 2013** – Las Cruces BLM office agreed to defer Otero Mesa oil and gas leasing until after resource management plan completed.

**May 2014** – Organ Mountain–Desert Peaks National Monument designated by President Obama.

**October 2014** – New Mexico Wild co-hosted national conference with 1,200 attendees to celebrate 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. Historian Douglas Brinkley proclaimed New Mexico headquarters of wilderness protection movement.

**December 2014** –Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Act signed by President Obama, protecting 46,000 acres in Taos County.

**March 2015** – Appeal of Fish and Wildlife Service Mexican wolf management rule filed.

**May 2015** – Cerros del Norte Conservation Act introduced to create new Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness areas within Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.

**2016** – Wild Guide, a comprehensive guide to

all New Mexico's Wilderness and Wilderness Study Areas, published.

**June 2016** – Joined New Mexico v. Fish and Wildlife Service lawsuit over wolf releases on the side of FWS.

**September 2016** – New Mexico Wild analysis estimated there are 5,272,947 acres of Wilderness-quality lands remaining in New Mexico not currently protected.

**May 2017** – New Mexico Wild celebrates its 20th anniversary of protecting Wilderness, water and wildlife in New Mexico.

**February 2017** – Cohosted historic meeting between All Pueblo Council of Governors and Navajo Nation president about protecting greater Chaco landscape from oil and gas development.

**2117** – Great-, great-, great-grandchildren enjoy our public lands and thank New Mexico Wild supporters for the vision and effort to protect Wilderness.



2017 wolf rally. Photo: courtesy of Wild Earth Guardians



Rio Grande float trip. Photo: Irene Owsley



# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO REPORT

## Reject Calls to Lessen Our Monument

Las Cruces Sun-News Editorial Board

A concerted effort has been taking place between local business and government leaders to market and promote the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument for nearly three years now, and it's starting to show results.

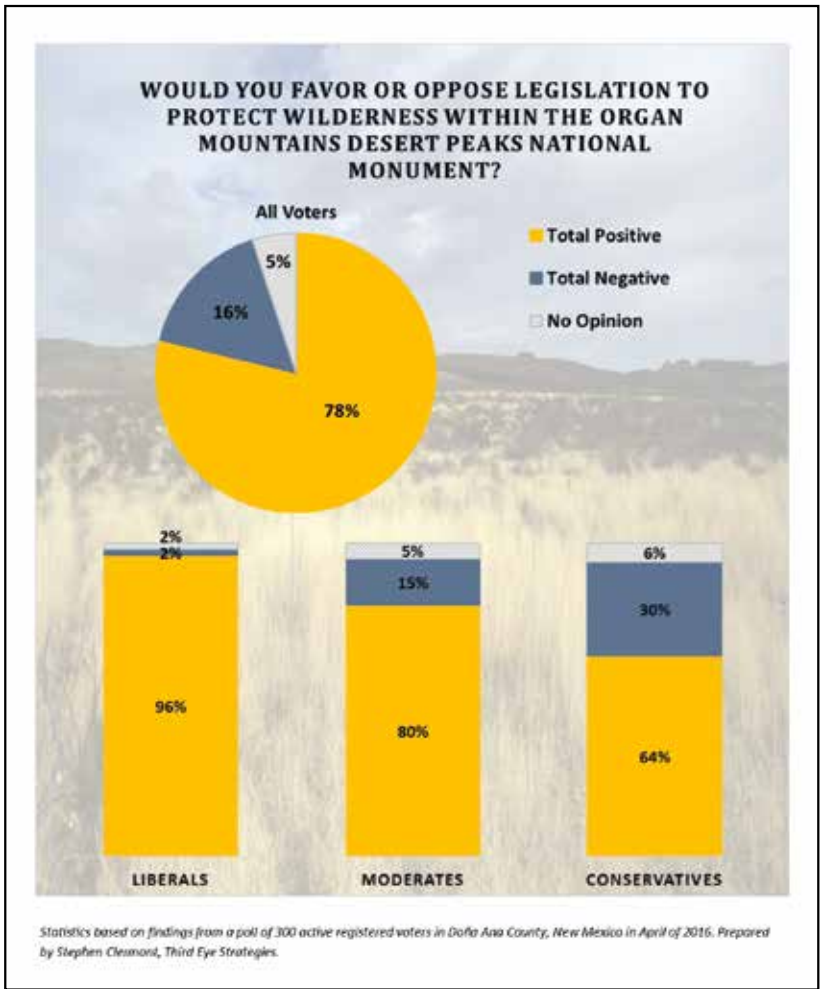
A visit in December by then-Interior Secretary Sally Jewell provided an opportunity to tout how much had been accomplished in the short time since President Barack Obama declared the monument in May 2014. Visitation to the monument had more than doubled in the past year, according to Bureau of Land Management statistics. Local businesses have created new products to tie into the monument's marketing effort, and Realtors began touting the new monument in their sales pitch for homes in Las Cruces.

House listings now include "20 minutes from the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument," Realtor Renee Franks said.

The city's Convention and Visitors Bureau notes that there are now three national monuments in the area, with the Prehistoric Trackways and White Sands, and sees the opportunity to market all three in a vacation pitch to adventure tourists as a big part of its plan for bringing more travelers into the area.

Now comes news that some in Congress, including our U.S. Rep. Steve Pearce, would like to reverse the progress that has been made. And, there is even concern by monument supporters that newly elected President Donald Trump could seek to undo Obama's proclamation.

That seems unlikely, and would certainly be challenged in court if it were to happen. More worrisome, it seems, would be some kind of challenge from Congress. Republican members especially have opposed efforts to designate public lands for protection. To that end,



legislation has been introduced to neuter the Antiquities Act, requiring a president to get approval before making any new designations.

Pearce was active in opposing the monument designation during the long and sometime heated debate that took place for well over a year in our community. He favored a much smaller monument covering part of just the Organ Mountains. But, that position put him at odds with local governments, all of which passed resolutions in support of the monument.

We also believe that the majority of residents were, and continue to be, supporters of the monument. That is reflected by the support shown by all of their local elected boards. And, none of the dire consequences that we were warned about by opponents before the designation have come to fruition in the years since.

Still, Pearce wants to "work with the Trump administration to make modifications from the 500,000-acre footprint created by the Obama administration," said his spokesperson Keeley Christensen.

We believe Pearce would be going against the majority of his constituents if he were to do that and strongly urge him to reconsider. Or, at the very least, come to Las Cruces and hold a public meeting on the issue to determine what people living here want.

We know what Pearce wants, but that is less important. He is our representative. And, he cannot effectively represent this community while going against the will of the majority of its residents.

We have no doubt that any attempt to roll back the monument designation will stall economic development efforts and reignite a bitter debate that we thought had been put to rest. And the only thing gained would be confusion and uncertainty.

*Editor's note: The following editorial appeared in the Las Cruces Sun-News on Feb. 21, 2017. It is reprinted here with permission.*

### ORGAN MOUNTAINS-DESERT PEAKS NATIONAL MONUMENT (OMDP)

Located at the Crossroads of New Mexican and American History  
**Permanent Protection = Permanent Economic Opportunity**

#### New Opportunities Because of OMDP

- Monuments to Main Street Festival  
[www.Monuments2MainStreet.com](http://www.Monuments2MainStreet.com)
- Attracting Conferences, Retirees, & New Businesses
- Helicopter, Van, & Recreation Tours
- OMDP Branded Products
- Community Tourism & Marketing

#### Recreation Activities

- Hiking
- Camping
- Mountain Biking
- Horseback Riding
- Climbing
- Birding
- Hunting

#### Historic Sites

- Apollo Astronaut Training Area
- Petroglyphs
- Billy the Kid Sites
- Butterfield Stagecoach Trail
- World War II Bombing Targets

#### A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON THE REGION

**102% INCREASE**  
In Visitors to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks  
**FROM 2015 TO 2016**

FY2015: 84,197    FY2016: 170,451

**POPULAR COMMUNITY ASSET**

Doña Ana County voters overwhelmingly support the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (61% positive, 14% negative)

#### OUR STAR IS ON THE MAP

International media exposure  
Sunset Magazine ★ LA Times  
Lonely Planet ★ Trip Advisor

[www.OrganMountains.org](http://www.OrganMountains.org)

Visit LAS CRUCES  
PRB  
G



# Public Lands are a Driver for Economic Development

By Philip San Filippo, Carrie Hamblen and David Crider

As leaders of economic development in southern New Mexico, we know the immense value that national monuments and protected public lands contribute to our economic vitality. In Las Cruces, the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument is bringing more visitors, creating priceless advertising and is fast becoming a key piece of a sustainable economic future for our region. We know the same to be true for the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in northern New Mexico.

Visitation has substantially increased since Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks' designation, helped by local marketing efforts and recognition in national publications such as Lonely Planet. In the monument's Organ Mountains portion alone, visitation increased by 102 percent in fiscal year 2016, 170,451 visitors, compared to fiscal year 2015, 84,197 visitors, according to Bureau of Land Management data.

Other efforts have helped drive this increase. Last year saw our first Monuments to Main Street festival, which combined existing community festivals with new events and outdoor excursions, including commercial helicopter flights over the increasingly popular Desert Peaks part of our national monument. The 2017 Monuments to Main Street is already planned for September.

Our new monument also has drawn three conferences to our community, bringing over 1,500 room-nights in local hotels. This visitation surge will increase over time as Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks continues to gain national and international notoriety.

Permanent protection for these beautiful lands has resulted in permanent economic opportunity for our region.

The monument designation came after years of public discourse and was supported by vast majorities of voters in southern New Mexico. Our local coalition — including elected officials, sportsmen, business owners, tribes and Latino leaders, conservationists, veterans and faith leaders — worked for years to protect these public lands, but were repeatedly stymied by congressional inaction. The Obama administration and Sens. Tom Udall, Martin Heinrich and Jeff Bingaman all worked hard to seek out the thoughts of local residents over a multi-year period leading up to the monument's designation.

After our community's hard work and successes, we found recent calls from Utah Congressman Rob Bishop to take away our national monuments to be shocking, upsetting and completely against our community's interest. Rolling back national monument designations would likely lead to privatizing our treasured public lands and would remove the incredible branding that national monuments give Las Cruces, Taos and other communities across the country. Any attempt to remove these important protections would never stand the scrutiny and sustained public consultation that brought us these monuments in the first place.

In fact, it was the sustained consultation with the public that provided the impetus to protect not only the iconic Organ Mountains, but also many other historically important areas such as petroglyphs, Billy the Kid sites, the Butterfield Stage Route and World War

II bombing targets used to train our airmen. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Rio Grande del Norte and numerous other national monuments have been established under the Antiquities Act, a law that provides presidents with the ability to protect lands that are important to our nation's history and natural heritage. In the past 110 years, 16 presidents — eight Republicans and eight Democrats — have used the Antiquities Act. In doing so, they have protected worthy public lands and historic sites to be shared, accessed and enjoyed by all Americans — both present and future generations.

Thanks to President Obama's use of the Antiquities Act, our new monuments will be preserved forever. For local businesses, this preservation provides us with new ways to market our community and attract new residents looking to settle here and create jobs.

Unfortunately, Bishop's radical proposal threatens the values and opportunities that our monuments create. The Trump administration would do well to look at how the recently designated monuments, such as those here in New Mexico, are widely supported and benefitting local economies. Our experience with Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument demonstrates how the Antiquities Act works and why it is in the interest of Americans everywhere to fight short-sighted efforts to take away monuments.

*Philip San Filippo is the executive director of the Las Cruces Convention & Visitors Bureau. Carrie Hamblen is the CEO of the Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce. David Crider is the owner of Southwest Expeditions in Las Cruces.*



**Renee Frank**, a Las Cruces real estate agent, said the monument designation has raised interest among people considering buying homes or relocating to Las Cruces.

"I've seen improvement in how people view our wonderful places," she said.

"House listings now include '20 minutes from the Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument.'"

**Chris Faivre**, director of marketing and communications for Visit Las Cruces, said the designation sparked the successful Monuments to Main Street held in September — a 30-day celebration of the monument with visitors and the local businesses that have capitalized on its draw.

"We created ... a really nice event that we intend to continue each year," he said. "We see this as the beginning of something great."



## Thank you Senator Udall and Senator Heinrich

for reintroducing Wilderness legislation for the **Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte National Monuments**



We applaud your commitment to protecting New Mexico's wild places, scenic beauty, cultural resources and recreation opportunities. Your leadership will ensure that these special places get the protection they deserve.





# SOUTHERN NEW MEXICO REPORT

## Planning for the Future of Southeastern New Mexico's Wild Chihuahuan Desert

By Joelle Marier, Staff

We are fortunate in the West to have millions of acres of public lands right in our backyards. Places to hike, hunt, camp, fish, relax, horseback ride, bike or just enjoy beautiful views. Places with clean air, clean water, wildlife and healthy natural ecosystems. With public lands in southeast New Mexico surrounding many Western communities it's easy to take them for granted, to assume they'll remain healthy, wild and free from development long into the future.

With increasing pressure from corporate interests seeking to use our public lands for profit, there is a need – now more than ever – for us to fight to maintain the integrity of our public lands. The first step in this challenging path is to raise public awareness about the laws and policies that support our public lands legacy. The second step is to make sure the voices of public land users and public land lovers are heard and incorporated into land management decisions during the land-use planning process.

Communities of southeast New Mexico are in the thick of this challenge right now as the Carlsbad Bureau of Land Management (BLM) draws near to a public comment period on its revised Resource Manage-

ment Plan. Getting this plan right is important because it will guide management of all BLM lands in the region for the next 15 to 20 years. As major oil- and gas-related companies like Exxon-Mobil, Chevron and Haliburton move operations to the Permian Basin, often looking to BLM lands to boost profits, it is imperative to ensure conservation takes a front seat in the revised plan. Historically, BLM lands in the West have catered to industry, despite a multiple-use mission. Community support is an integral component of gaining ground for conservation and protecting our public lands legacy.

As more and more Americans look to our public lands for recreation, solitude, inspiration and livelihoods, modern-day land managers must accommodate those uses, but they need our support to do this. If you're a lover of southern New Mexico's wild lands and care about maintaining our state's unique natural and cultural heritage, we need your voice in this upcoming plan revision. The draft comment period, slated to run from June through September of 2017, will be our last opportunity to ensure the BLM hears a loud and clear voice for conservation in southeast New Mexico. Please join us in telling the agency to protect remaining wildlands and conserve important habitats in southeast

New Mexico's wild Chihuahuan desert. **Take action at** [http://bit.ly/Carlsbad\\_Comments](http://bit.ly/Carlsbad_Comments). **For talking points and more information visit** [http://bit.ly/Carlsbad\\_RMP](http://bit.ly/Carlsbad_RMP). **Stay up to date on the planning process by signing up for our monthly mailing list at** [http://bit.ly/Carlsbad\\_Action](http://bit.ly/Carlsbad_Action).



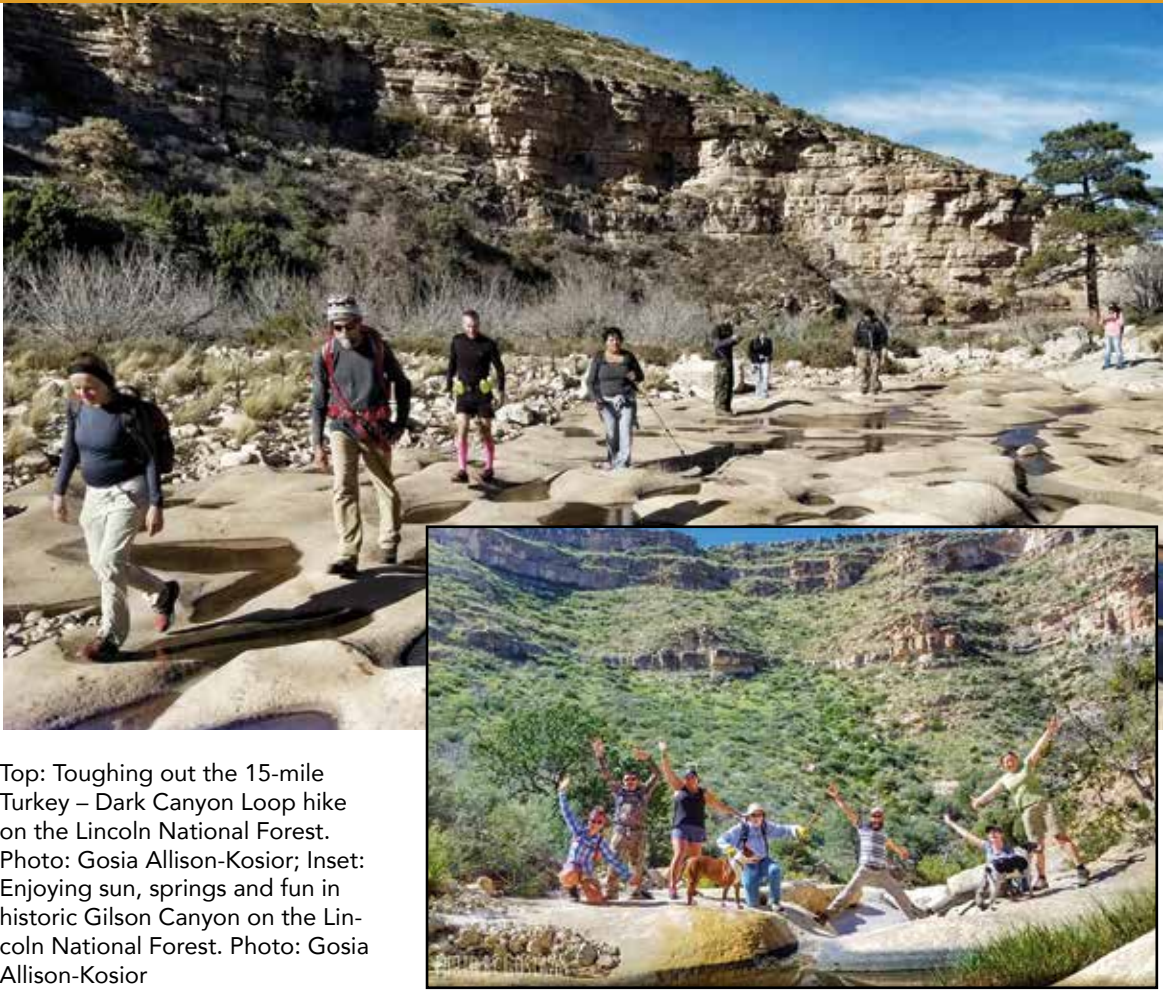
Contact [joelle@nmwild.org](mailto:joelle@nmwild.org) to get this free sticker and show your support for southeast New Mexico's wild Chihuahuan desert. 🌵

## The Secret to Gaining Public Land Advocates in SE New Mexico: Public Land

It turns out the best organizer for public lands advocacy is the land itself. Since October, we've explored miles and miles of wild lands across the Lincoln National Forest, Carlsbad Caverns National Park, Guadalupe Mountains National Park and Bureau of Land Management lands in southeastern New Mexico with more adventure to come. With help from dedicated volunteer Gosia Allison-Kosior and a wide variety of adventurous hikers, we've had fun, raised awareness and gained dedicated and informed local advocates in the process.

We'll be exploring Carlsbad's wild places for many months to come. Please join us for more adventure in southeast New Mexico's wild Chihuahuan desert!

Contact Joelle at [joelle@nmwild.org](mailto:joelle@nmwild.org) or (505) 843-8696 x110 to find out about upcoming events. You can also visit our website at [www.nmwild.org/events-outings](http://www.nmwild.org/events-outings). 🌵



Top: Toughing out the 15-mile Turkey – Dark Canyon Loop hike on the Lincoln National Forest. Photo: Gosia Allison-Kosior; Inset: Enjoying sun, springs and fun in historic Gilson Canyon on the Lincoln National Forest. Photo: Gosia Allison-Kosior



# Tribal Leaders Hold Historic Summit to Protect Chaco Canyon

The All Pueblo Council of Governors (APCG) met with Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque in February to talk about how tribal nations in the Southwest can work together to protect sacred sites in the Greater Chaco Canyon Region. The APCG has been meeting for over 400 years to discuss tribal issues, but the meeting between leaders of APCG and the Navajo Nation was the first of its kind.

The purpose of the meeting was to establish common ground between the tribes regarding their stance on protection of Chaco and to facilitate further government-to-government consultation between tribal governments and federal agencies, including the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs and National Park Service, during actions or management plans that may affect Chaco Canyon, traditional cultural properties and sacred sites in the Greater Chaco Landscape.

During the historic meeting, Begaye affirmed the importance of Chaco to tribal nations in the Southwest and laid the groundwork for further cooperation in stating, “The meeting today is historic because it reaffirms our connection to each other as native people and our shared commitment to working with other tribal nations in the Southwest. Our ancestral homelands are intertwined and all of them deserve to be protected for future generations.”

As a result of the meeting, an intertribal work group of pueblo, Navajo and other Southwest tribal nations will be built to facilitate continued cooperation and unity between tribes to protect Chaco Canyon and the many sacred sites radiating from its epicenter.

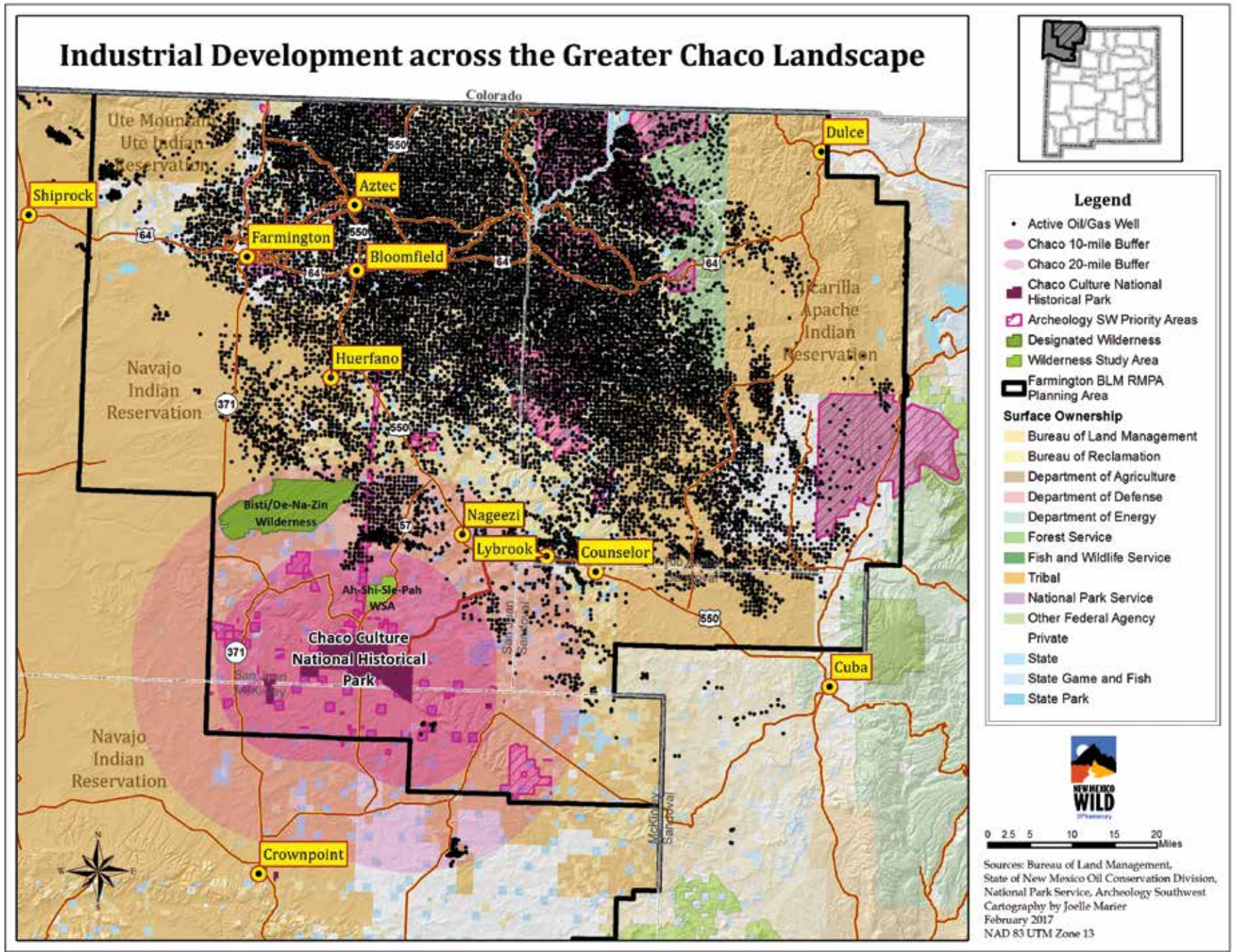


The All Pueblo Council of Governors stand together with Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye in support of protecting the Greater Chaco Region. Photo: Jon Sims, No Reservations Production

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance was honored to be a part of this summit and Executive Director Mark Allison pledged that New Mexico Wild stands ready to support these efforts in solidarity.

Oil and gas development pose a major threat to traditional land uses, sacred sites, traditional cultural properties and environmental health in the Greater Chaco Region. Many sites have already been overrun by development, making protection of remaining sites essential to maintaining Chaco’s cultural legacy for many generations to come.

Show your support for Protecting Greater Chaco. Sign our online petition at <http://bit.ly/ProtectGreaterChaco> and like us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ProtectChaco/>. Don’t forget to share our page with your friends! 📌







# Who's Who at the Federal Level

By Tania Soussan

**T**he conservation front lost ground on the national political landscape on Nov. 8 when Donald Trump and a Republican Congressional majority were elected.

Within days of entering office, Trump and others were dismantling environmental protections and hard-won conservation victories.

But the news isn't all bad. Champions like New Mexico's own Democratic Sen. Martin Heinrich, who sits on the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, continue to fight for public lands and other environmental causes. In fact, Heinrich tweeted on Nov. 17: "Any admin that tries to reverse 100-year history of #PublicLands that belong to every American, is going to have to do it over my dead body."

He was reacting to Trump's threats to undo national monuments created by President Obama under the 1906 Antiquities Act. Those include the Rio Grande del Norte and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks national monuments in New Mexico and the new Bears Ears National Monument in Utah.

**Here's a look at who's who in this new federal government:**

## President Donald Trump



Within days of taking office, Donald Trump began work to undo environmental regulation. He directed the Army to issue a final permit for the Dakota Access Pipeline and invited the company behind the Keystone XL Pipeline to reapply for a permit.

Trump has called global warming a "hoax" and promised on the campaign trail to undo the Clean Power Plan, a signature Obama administration measure to address climate change.

He also has called Environmental Protection Agency and Agriculture Department regulations harmful and vowed to scrap a stream and wetland protection rule.

## Ryan Zinke, Department of the Interior



Rep. Ryan Zinke, a Republican from Montana, was a Navy Seal for two decades before entering politics. At the Interior Department, he will oversee the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Zinke has a mixed record on conservation. He endorsed completing billions of dollars in backlogged projects at national parks. He has opposed the sale of federal lands to the states but supported mining and drilling on them. In the past he has said climate change is "not a settled science." But during his confirmation hearing, he said climate change is real and that humans are almost certainly the cause, but also that there's a debate among scientists over how much. He is a sportsman but has not been a friend to threatened and endangered species. Zinke has a 3 percent score on the League of Conservation Voters' annual scorecard.

## Mike Noel, Bureau of Land Management



Republican Utah congressman and cattle rancher Mike Noel once worked for the BLM but now is one of the agency's harshest critics. Still, he is vying to be named the agency's next director. He says the BLM has strayed from its multiple use mandate and advocates reducing the size of the Grand

Staircase-Escalante National Monument. Noel also has criticized BLM limits on resource extraction and has led Utah's efforts to gain title to 31 million acres of public land, most of it administered by the BLM.

## Scott Pruitt, Environmental Protection Agency



As attorney general of Oklahoma, Pruitt led or took part in lawsuits against EPA regulations, including the Obama administration's efforts to tackle climate change. He has expressed doubts about the science behind climate change and its connection to man-made activities.

Pruitt also is thought to be in the pocket of oil and gas companies. He is expected to narrow the EPA's authority, slash staff and block efforts to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions.

## Rick Perry, Department of Energy



During his first failed bid for the Republican presidential nomination, Perry said he wanted to eliminate the Energy Department. It's an oops moment he won't be allowed to forget.

The former Texas governor also has questioned climate science, said carbon dioxide is not a pollutant and said that curbing the use of coal will "strangle our economy."

In a 2014 interview, he criticized Obama administration policies on climate change – including regulations to cut carbon emissions – and said science did not justify stopping the economic opportunity offered by expanded oil and gas exploration and by the Keystone pipeline to bring Canadian tar sands oil to the Gulf Coast.

## Sonny Perdue, Department of Agriculture



Trump's pick for Agriculture secretary, former Georgia governor Sonny Perdue grew up on a farm and earned a doctorate in veterinary medicine. In 2007, he attracted national attention for holding a public vigil to pray for rain during a drought.

As head of the Agriculture Department he would oversee the U.S. Forest Service and influence the Farm Bill. Perdue has the support of sportsmen and did approve a \$100 million Georgia Land Conservation Act, but conservationists worry about his ties to the timber industry and his dismissal of climate change science.

## Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, chairwoman, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee



Lisa Murkowski is a proponent of oil and gas production on public lands, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and supports decreased regulation of the oil and gas industry. Her website calls her "a champion of access to federal lands and waters." However, unlike many Republicans, she acknowledges climate change is real and in 2015 voted for a bill amendment that said "human activity contributes to climate change."

*Continued on page 15*





# Trumping the Wild?

By Dave Foreman, Staff

One night last November, Nancy and I tuned into CNN to celebrate the election of the first woman as president of the United States — and to watch the Democrats retake the U.S. Senate. But as the evening wore on, I suddenly felt a cosmic shudder, which made me spill much of my second martini. It was as though the wall to a parallel universe had briefly shattered and I had fallen through into a similar but oddly twisted universe. Here, Donald Trump was being elected president and the Republicans were holding onto a narrow majority in the Senate.

It wasn't the first election disaster I have faced as a conservationist, however. It was the third. In 1980, Ronald Reagan beat Jimmy Carter, and in 2000, the Supreme Court appointed George W. Bush president over Al Gore, who had won the popular vote and may have won Florida for an Electoral College win as well, had the votes in the Sunshine State been fully and rightly counted.

If we key in on the matters important for conservationists — most of all public lands and endangered species — we can compare Trump to Reagan and Bush, Jr. *We have been here before and have come through.*

## REAGAN

From about 1976 through 1980, public lands grazing permittees, spoiled by being left alone for generations, along with mining and drilling corporations, pushed the "Sagebrush Rebellion" to hand public lands belonging to all Americans over to the states and then to private interests at cut-rate prices. Reagan, who had had an OK record on conservation as governor of California, shifted and became a Sagebrush Rebel.

He appointed James Watt as Interior secretary. Watt was a Colorado attorney and head of the smoking-hot, anti-conservation law firm Mountain States Legal Foundation, which was started and bankrolled by the far-right Coors brothers, owners of Coors Beer. (The Coors boys were that era's version of the Koch brothers.)

Reagan named Anne Gorsuch, a hard-right Colorado state legislator and mother of new Supreme Court justice Neil Gorsuch, head of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and another reactionary Colorado state legislator, Bob Burford, as director of the Bureau of Land Management. Burford was a big rancher with a BLM grazing permit and hated the agency. To oversee the Forest Service, Reagan picked timber industry lobbyist John Crowell.



President Donald Trump in late March rescinded a number of Obama administration climate change initiatives, easing the way for increased oil and gas drilling on public lands. Photo: courtesy BLM

Watt and Burford did their best to kneecap the BLM's fledgling Wilderness program and to limit the areas to be studied for Wilderness Area recommendation. Watt further worked to offer oil and gas drilling leases in designated Wilderness Areas. Moreover, as a far-out Christian evangelical, he warned that Jesus would be returning soon — and boy, would he be pissed if we hadn't used up all the natural resources He and God had given us to use.

Crowell pushed the willing Forest Service brass to boost timber sales — especially in roadless areas and in ancient forests. Forest supervisors and district rangers who didn't "get the cut out" had their careers whacked.

So bad was Watt that editorial cartoonists had a field day — indeed, Watt became the personification of destroying nature. The Sierra Club got one million signatures on a petition to fire him. Earth First! made Watt its honorary membership chair. Donations to and memberships in conservation groups shot up to unprecedented levels. Even Republican senators became worried about the harm Watt was doing (mostly to their re-election chances). After Watt told a tasteless joke, Reagan found an excuse to fire him.

Earth First! blockaded timber sales, climbed old-growth trees to keep them from being cut down, occupied uranium mines near the Grand Canyon and much more. The Sierra Club and other mainstream groups effectively fought the worst of the Forest Service, Interior and EPA atrocities. Indeed, Reagan ended up signing a passel of Wilderness bills, often proposed by Republicans in Congress.

Bad things happened on Reagan's watch, but conservationists held the line.

*Continued on page 19*

## WHO'S WHO AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL, continued from page 12

### Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, chairman, House Natural Resources Committee



On his website, Rep. Rob Bishop says, "Protecting private property rights and state sovereignty and preserving our western heritage are among my chief priorities on the committee." He is a longtime proponent of transferring federal lands to states and local governments. He also has attacked the Endangered Species Act, telling E&E News in December 2016 that the ESA is so dysfunctional that lawmakers may "simply have to start over again" and "repeal it and replace it." He has a League of Conservation Voters lifetime score of 3 percent. 🐻

### New Mexico Wild Turns 20!

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. We're rolling out a series of events across the state. Check out the events page at [www.nmwild.org](http://www.nmwild.org) for details.

Here in New Mexico—the birthplace of Wilderness in 1924—there have been many successes, and there is much work still to be done. Join us!



# Who's Who in New Mexico State Government

By Judy Calman, Staff

New Mexico's state government and leadership is mixed in terms of conservation. While we are fortunate to have many conservation champions in our state Legislature and currently experience majority support for environmental issues in both chambers, we also have a governor and state land commissioner who have been vocally opposed to public land protection, endangered species protection and clean energy. The governor appoints the heads of many state departments, including the New Mexico Environment Department, the Oil and Gas Conservation Division and the New Mexico Game Commission, ensuring that her anti-conservation views trickle down.

## Gov. Susana Martinez



Republican Susana Martinez has been an outspoken opponent of endangered Mexican gray wolves and predators in general and an advocate for policies which benefit the oil and gas industry. Indeed, she campaigned openly on promises to roll back existing state oil and gas regulations (which she has accomplished) and pulled New Mexico out from being a cooperating partner in the Mexican wolf recovery program.

## Aubrey Dunn, State Land Office



Aubrey Dunn, Republican, is the elected state land commissioner. He oversees all activity on the 9 million (surface) acres of New Mexico State Trust Lands. This includes administering grazing, as well as leasing surface acres for oil and gas development. Commissioner Dunn has opposed Wilderness within the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument and has been an outspoken supporter of so called "public land seizure" bills, which would take federal public lands and give them to the state. State Trust Lands are not publicly accessible and they have no requirement to comply with federal environmental laws.

**LEGISLATURE:** New Mexico is lucky to have many legislators who are conservation champions. Below are a few standouts. Other champions include Sens. Cisco McSorley and Mimi Stewart and Reps. Gail Chasey and Georgene Louis.

## Senate Majority Leader Peter Wirth



Sen. Wirth, D-Santa Fe, is an attorney who has been serving in the Legislature since 2004. In 2017, after several years of chairing the Senate Conservation Committee, he was selected as Senate Majority Leader. He continues to serve on Senate Conservation (as well as Senate Judiciary) and continues to stand up for New Mexico's public lands, renewable energy companies and wildlife.

## House Speaker Brian Egolf



Rep. Egolf has served in the House since 2009, and this year became speaker for the House, leading the Democratic majority. He is an attorney in Santa Fe and has championed legislation to improve New Mexico's solar economy. He has been outspoken with regards to all conservation issues, including those affecting land and wildlife.

## Sen. Bill Soules



Sen. Soules, D-Las Cruces, is chairman of the Senate Education Committee and a member of the Senate Conservation Committee. He is a tireless friend to New Mexico's public lands. A passionate teacher from Las Cruces, he always attends rallies supporting new national monuments, carries pro-public lands bills and memorials and continues to give his support to New Mexico's unique landscapes.

## Sen. Jeff Steinborn



When he's not at the Roundhouse, Sen. Jeff Steinborn, D-Las Cruces, works for the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. He spends both his work life and much of his legislative life standing up for New Mexico's land, water and wildlife. Steinborn serves on the Senate Rules Committee as well as the Senate Public Affairs Committee.

## Sen. Howie Morales



Sen. Morales, D-Silver City, a professor at Western New Mexico University, has been in the Legislature since 2008. For years he has been a passionate advocate for the Gila River and the surrounding Wilderness. He serves on the Senate Finance Committee.

## Rep. Nathan Small



New to the Roundhouse this year is New Mexico Wild's own Nathan Small, D-Las Cruces, who we are sure will continue to be a great friend to New Mexico's public lands and wild places. He is beginning his legislative tenure as vice chairman of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee.

## Rep. Bill McCamley



Rep. Bill McCamley, D-Mesilla Park, has been serving in the Legislature since 2013. This year he is a member of the House Energy and Natural Resources Committee as well as two other committees. Several years ago, McCamley was the lone "no" vote on a bill that would seize public lands from the federal government and give them to the state. He gave an impassioned speech that day in support of public lands and has continued to be a conservation ally ever since.

## Game Commission

The New Mexico Game Commission is a seven-member panel entirely appointed by the governor. It has control over hunting and fishing licenses, predator control and the budget of the Game and Fish Department. Because the entire commission is generally replaced every time a new governor takes office, there have been large swings in how wildlife is managed during different administrations. During the Martinez administration, the commission has been particularly anti-predator and has acted to increase the number of bears and cougars killed in the state and to openly oppose the Mexican gray wolf recovery program.

## Interstate Stream Commission

Like the Game Commission, the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) is a governor-appointed board comprised of nine members. Its task is to investigate, protect, conserve and develop New Mexico's waters, including both interstate and intrastate stream systems. The commission's authority under state law includes negotiating with other states to settle interstate stream controversies, investigating and developing the water supplies of the state, and instituting legal proceedings in the name of the state for planning, conservation, protection and development of public waters. The ISC also experiences large swings in policy due to all of its members changing in each new administration. The ISC recently won the "Black Hole Award," for being the worst public agency in the country for the free flow of information that belongs to the public.

*Continued on page 15*



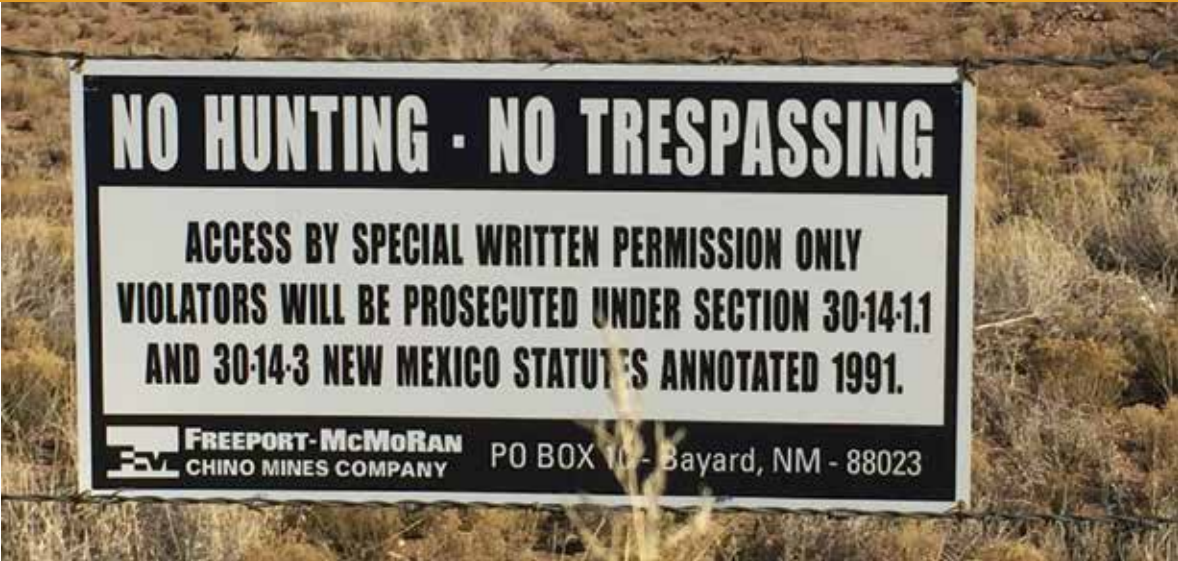
# PUBLIC LANDS: More Threatened Than Ever

By Judy Calman, Staff

For the past six years, New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has joined other conservation organizations in defeating both national- and state-level bills that attempt to force the federal government to give public lands or federal mineral rights to the states. We are currently experiencing an unprecedented drive to deny the federal government the right to manage and protect or simply hold jurisdiction over the nation’s land – your land and mine.

This drive manifests itself in many ways, from efforts to decrease the budgets of the land management agencies (and then call them ineffective) to reducing regulations to calls for outright giveaway and sale of public land. It can even be seen in the likes of the Bundy ranching family, which occupied an Oregon federal wildlife refuge. Ryan Bundy openly refuses to recognize the validity of the federal government and is defended by elected officials. In 2016, the Republican Party took the remarkable step of incorporating this anti-public lands rhetoric into its official party platform.

With Rep. Rob Bishop, R-Utah, chairing the House Natural Resources Committee (and with New Mexico’s own Steve Pearce as a member), we are seeing increased efforts to delegitimize public land ownership. Indeed, Chairman Bishop has targeted the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte national monuments in New Mexico for elimination. The Republican-controlled House passed a rule in January that will allow the chamber to consider federal land transfers cost-free and budget-neutral – a



What once was state trust land is now owned by a private company and closed to the public. Photo: Mark Allison

move designed to make it easier to give our nation’s lands to states.

At the state level, the bills of this type (usually championed by Rep. Yvette Herrell, R-Alamogordo) have varied over the years, sometimes demanding immediate transfer of the land and sometimes focused on creating a “study” to consider the feasibility of such a transfer.

These bills have evolved to appear not as outright seizures of public land, but as smaller incursions that seem less threatening. For example, in the 2017 legislative session, New Mexico Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn authored a bill which would have taken federal mineral rights under private land in New Mexico and given those rights to the state. Fortunately, so many people called in opposition to the bill that it was withdrawn.

Another example was Utah Congressman Jason Chaffetz’s bill to immediately sell 3.3 million acres of so-called federal disposal land to private interests. Disposal lands are usually small areas of federal public lands surrounded by either state or private land, making them difficult to access. As with Dunn’s bill, Rep. Chaffetz received so many phone calls opposing his idea that he likewise withdrew his bill. Both of these instances highlight how public pressure can succeed in defeating bad bills.

New Mexico Wild will continue to oppose any effort at either the state or federal level to sell off or seize public lands. Any encroachment into public ownership of land sets a bad precedent and sets the stage for further seizures. Public lands belong to all Americans, and we are committed to keeping it that way forever. 🦋

93%

of New Mexicans think conserving wildlands and recreational opportunities for future generations is important.\*

\*From a 2016 statewide poll of registered New Mexico voters commissioned by the Center for Civic Policy.

## WHO’S WHO IN NEW MEXICO STATE GOVERNMENT, continued from page 14

### Oil and Gas Conservation Division

The Oil Conservation Division (OCD) oversees the underground portions of New Mexico’s oil and gas development, from permitting and inspecting wells to dealing with spills and clean-ups. Unlike the State Land Office, this department is fully under the control of the governor. At the direction of the governor, OCD does have the power to enact additional regulations to protect state land and water during mineral extraction. It did so under the Richardson administration, creating the “pit rule” which regulated fracking wastewater. Acting on a campaign promise, Gov. Martinez directed OCD to rescind the rule, which it did in 2012.

### Environment Department

The Environment Department oversees most additional environmental issues in the state, including air quality, hazardous waste, water quality and radiation. It is also wholly under the purview of the governor and, from 2012 until this year, was run by Ryan Flynn. (After stepping down, Flynn was immediately named executive director of the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association – the state’s top oil and gas lobbying group. It was a bit of a surprise, as most concerns during his confirmation hearings were about his coziness with the mining industry and possible conflicts of interest.) Gov. Martinez’s replacement for Flynn is Butch Tongate, who has been deputy secretary since 2011. Like the other departments under Martinez’s direction, OCD has reduced regulations on industry at the expense of environmental protections, including rewriting the state’s copper mine rule to include specific language requested by the industry. 🦋



# New Weapon in Fight Against Geothermal Leasing in the Jemez?

By Judy Calman, Staff



A family enjoys the San Antonio Hot Springs in the Jemez Mountains. Photo: Mark Allison

Since May of 2015, we have been fighting to stop a Santa Fe National Forest proposal to lease approximately 195,000

acres of the Jemez Ranger District for geothermal production. The proposal area is immediately adjacent to three sides of the Valles Caldera National Preserve and contains portions of nine Inventoried Roadless Areas as well as San Antonio hot springs and many more of the most visited recreation sites in the state.

Geothermal production, while officially 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.

Over the winter holidays, Valles Caldera National Preserve proposed that thermal features within the preserve be designated “significant thermal features” per the Geothermal Steam Act. This would ensure

protection of those features and also require other agencies to ensure those features are not negatively impacted by geothermal production in surrounding areas. We believe this might help discourage any actual development in the Jemez proposal area, should the Santa Fe National Forest decide to allow leasing. New Mexico Wilderness Alliance submitted comments in support of the Valles Caldera proposal and we will update our membership when a decision is made.

We are expecting a final decision on the proposal in the next six months. New Santa Fe National Forest Supervisor James Melonas will make the final decision on geothermal leasing. It’s not too late to call or write and urge him to choose Alternative 3, which is the No Leasing Alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. He can be reached at 11 Forest Lane, Santa Fe, NM 87508, or (505) 438-5300. 📧

74%

of New Mexicans support upholding the methane rule to require oil and gas producers who operate on national public lands to use modern technology and equipment to prevent leaks of methane gas and reduce flaring; 18% of residents do not support the rule.\*

*Editor’s note: It is estimated that New Mexico loses about \$100 million worth of gas annually on federal and tribal lands from the leaking, venting and flaring of natural gas, resulting in a methane hot spot the size of Delaware above the Four Corners. Republican Gov. Susana Martinez and U.S. Rep. Steve Pearce, R-N.M., support the removal of the rule to limit methane emissions.*

82%

of New Mexicans support keeping existing national monument designations in place, while only 10% support removing these designations.\*

\*From the 2017 Conservation in the West Poll conducted by Lori Weigel (Public Opinion Strategies) and Dave Metz (Fairbank, Maslin, Maulin, Metz & Associates) for the Colorado College State of the Rockies Project.

## Sen. Tom Udall Celebrates Monument’s 4th Anniversary



Sen. Tom Udall celebrated the fourth anniversary of the creation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument with a crowd of community leaders in Taos in March. Courtesy Sen. Tom Udall

Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M., praised the broad support that helped make the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument a reality four years ago and urged community leaders to advocate for Wilderness designation within the monument.

“The effort to protect the Rio Grande Del Norte as a national monument was clearly a community-driven effort and is highlighted as a model for conservation across the entire country,” Udall said at a gathering of community leaders he hosted in Taos in late March to celebrate the monument anniversary.

“I want to remind you that we still have work to do here,” Udall said, adding that he and Sen. Martin

Heinrich, D-N.M., have re-introduced legislation to establish the Cerro del Yuta and Rio San Antonio Wilderness areas within the monument.

“We have the same broad community support for designating these two areas as wilderness as we did for the national monument designation,” he said, explaining that the legislation made it through the Senate last year, but failed in the House. “I will work hard to push those designations through Congress this session.” 📧



**Get your New Mexico Wild hat! Order online for \$20 at [nmwild.org/shop](http://nmwild.org/shop)**



# RIO GRANDE DEL NORTE NEWS: Sen. Martin Heinrich Rallies Support for Rio Grande del Norte National Monument



A standing-room only crowd raises their hands in support of public lands at a rally in Taos. Photo: Mark Allison

Sen. Martin Heinrich rallied a standing-room-only crowd at the Taos Mesa Brewing Mothership in February, urging local leaders and community members to help keep “public lands in public hands.”

“What you have here doesn’t exist in most places around the world,” Heinrich, D-N.M., told the Taos County group.

The Rio Grande Del Norte National Monument and other public lands in New Mexico are a treasure to many.

Many visit Taos for its pristine landscapes and public access to iconic treasures like the Rio Grande Del Norte and the Columbine-Hondo and Latir Wilderness areas. Economically, recreation on public lands brings in approximately \$6 billion a year and supports tens of thousands of jobs within New Mexico.

“Outfitter guides, ski areas, hunters and fishermen, grocery stores, motels and gas stations all benefit from recreational tourism throughout New Mexico,” Heinrich said.

**Taos War Chief Curtis Sandoval:**  
“Rio Grande del Norte was one of the best deals ever.” And “We need to stick together.”

Taos Mayor Dan Barrone said the creation of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument has been a boon to the region. “There was a 40 percent increase in visitation to the national monument in the first year, a 21 percent increase in lodger’s tax, and an 8.3 percent increase in gross receipts taxes to Taos County,” he said.

Heinrich, who has served as a guide and outfitter and spent many days on public lands in and around Taos, talked about his personal experiences on public lands.

**Sen. Martin Heinrich:**  
“We have a quality of life here that is the envy of the world because of our public lands.”

“My sons caught their first wild trout in the tributaries of the Rio Grande,” he said. “I have hiked, fished and hunted in areas like Columbine-Hondo Wilderness, Pecos Wilderness and the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument.”

But those public lands are facing new threats. Republicans in Congress have said they want to undo some of the national monument designations made by President Barack Obama. Those include the Rio Grande Del Norte and Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks national

**Mayor Linda Calhoun of Red River:**  
“We strongly support Wheeler Peak and Columbine-Hondo Wilderness areas.”

monuments in New Mexico and Bears Ear National Monument in Utah.

Heinrich, who told the crowd they would have to work hard to protect public lands, was joined by Red River Mayor Linda Calhoun, Taos Ski Valley Mayor Neil King, former Questa Mayor Esther Garcia and Taos Pueblo War Chief Curtis Sandoval.

Please contact your state legislators, Gov. Susana Martinez and State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn about your support for our public land system in New Mexico.

Gov. Martinez: (505) 476-2000  
New Mexico Senate: (505) 986-4714  
New Mexico House: (505) 986-4751  
State Land Office: (505) 827-5760

*Editor’s note: The resolution below was approved on a 3-1 vote with Commissioners Jim K. Fambro, Tom Blankenbom and Gabriel J. Romero voting in the affirmative. Commissioner Candyce O’Donnell voted no, and Commissioner Mark Gallegos was absent.*

**Taos County Resolution 2016-62.**  
**A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE VALUE OF NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS TO TAOS COUNTY.**

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the Taos County Board of Commissioners support continued national ownership and management of these invaluable public lands in Taos County, as well as in the United States generally, as national assets for all Americans.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board recognizes the irreplaceable value these lands provide to our economy, recreation, quality of life and national heritage.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED, this 20th day of December 2016. 🏔️



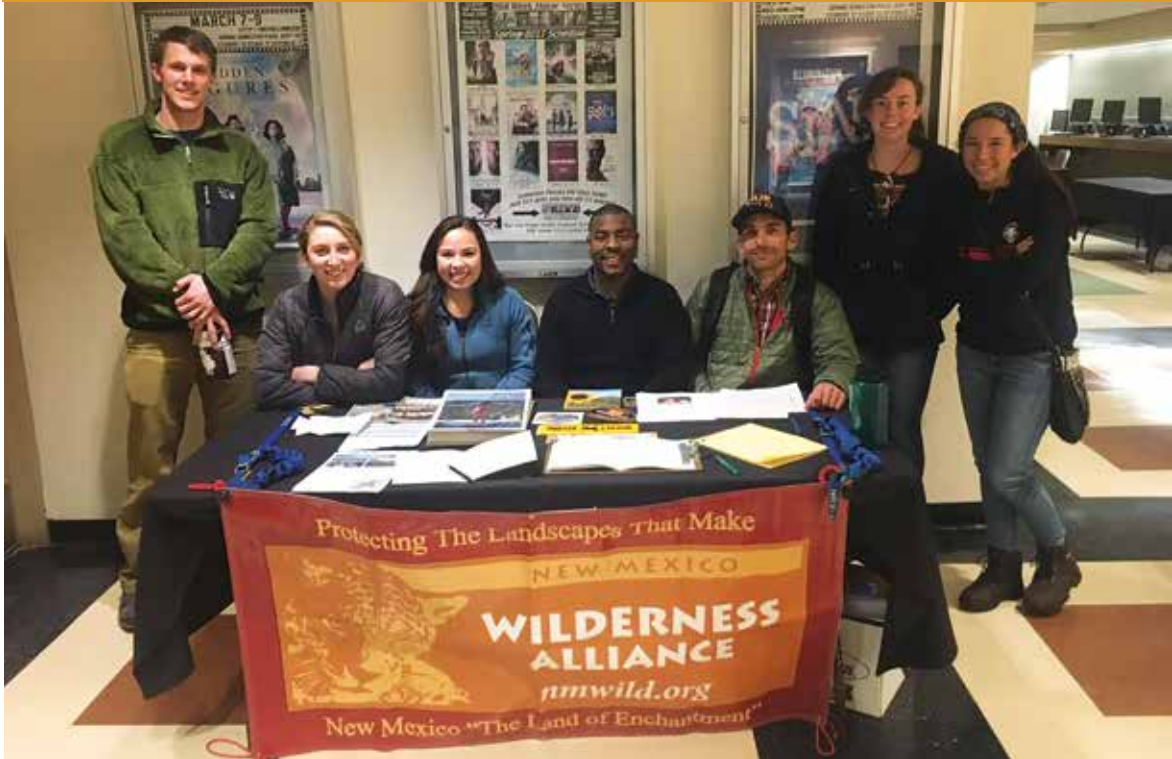




# UNM WILDERNESS ALLIANCE CHAPTER

## UNM Chapter Organizes Opposition to Public Land Transfers

By Ed Fordham



The UNM Wilderness Alliance hosts an informational table during the Telluride Mountainfilm Festival held on campus.

In New Mexico, we are fortunate to be able to follow in the footsteps of great conservationists like Aldo Leopold and Edward Abbey who saw something worth protecting in our landscapes. They showed us the path, and now it is up to us to carry the torch of environmental stewardship into the future. The threats to our wildlands and wilderness areas are greater than ever. This is why it is so important that everyone gets involved and contributes to the protection of our precious wild places.

From the preservationist perspective of John Muir – the perspective that wilderness possesses the innate right to exist – to the fact that we gain a sense of well-being just knowing

that untamed landscapes exist to the value of biodiversity and endangered species habitat, the reasons for protecting wilderness and wildlands are infinite. As the human impact on the environment continues to increase globally and pressure to exploit wildlands for their resources grows, we cannot forget that these intact ecosystems provide many services to humanity. Fresh air, clean water, spiritual nourishment and pure beauty are among the products provided by wilderness at no cost to us.

As a student organizer of the University of New Mexico chapter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, most of my work goes into getting more students involved in the

campaign to protect our wild places. Wilderness lacks a voice to speak up for itself when threatened. We have to be that voice. The more people we have involved in the effort to protect wilderness, the louder our voice will be.

Due to the increasing threat to our wild places from public land transfers proposed by state and federal politicians, the UNM Wilderness Alliance has taken on the job of creating a student-based coalition focused on preventing the transfer and sale of our federal public lands. Through collaboration with other student organizations, faculty, staff and individuals from the community, we aim to spread awareness on the UNM campus and create a loud enough voice to be heard throughout the state.

I cannot imagine a life without the joy of going out and experiencing the wild. The existence of our wild places is not guaranteed and, in light of the current political climate, it is clear we will have to work to ensure their existence into the future. The students of UNM have the potential to be powerful advocates of wilderness. The UNM Wilderness Alliance provides a way for students to get involved defending our wildlands. Please join in the cause.

If you are interested in getting involved, please contact us at [unmwild@unm.edu](mailto:unmwild@unm.edu).

*Ed Fordham studies environmental science and biology at the University of New Mexico and is the student president of the UNM Wilderness Alliance.*

## Welcome to New Mexico Wild



Please join us in welcoming Evan Gonzales as our new office manager! Evan comes to us with great experience with not-for-profit organizations, membership, volunteers and databases. He is pursuing a bachelor's degree in human resources. He has previous stints at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and the National Hispanic Cultural Center Foundation among others. We are very pleased he is now part of the team.

Welcome, Evan!



My name is Caleb Bulten, I am 17 years old and a junior at Sandia High School. I have lived in New Mexico my entire life, and ever since I was a little kid, I have loved to go out and hike, backpack and spend my time in the wilderness.

I found out about the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance when my AP environmental science teacher offered to take me on a restoration trip into the Sabinoso Wilderness. I went out there with the hopes of building a relationship with the staff and hopefully starting to work with them.

My internship with the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance has involved doing various office tasks regarding several petitions and events going on in New Mexico. I hope that this will lead to future opportunities in the potential career paths within the outdoor community.

I am interested in conservation because I want to help preserve what we have now for the sake of future generations. It takes many people to preserve land, but only one to destroy it, therefore I want to be involved in any way I can. I want to use my time and energy to help our endangered wilderness, by spreading my passion in the hopes of getting others interested in our wilderness.





Protesters rallied for public lands outside the Roundhouse in Santa Fe during the legislative session in February. Photo: Tisha Broska

BUSH/CHENEY

Al Gore could have been our best conservation/environmental president, but George W. Bush went the other way. His administration started off trying to overturn regulations and rules issued by the Clinton administration. Indeed, Bush/Cheney’s effort to toss the landmark Roadless Area Rule, which was meant to preserve national forest roadless areas, became a donnybrook in the courts for the whole eight years they were in office. Thanks to the dogged work of conservation groups, however, the Roadless Area Rule was saved. Being oilmen, Bush/Cheney worked to open nearly all federal lands and waters to drilling, pushing especially hard for leasing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Again, unyielding conservationists kept ANWR undrilled and untracked.

The Bush/Cheney appointments for conservation/environmental positions brought out a rogue’s list of the worst the Republican Party had to offer. Among the more outlandish were:

Department of the Interior

Gale Norton, James Watt’s protege at the Mountain States Legal Foundation and a hard-line attorney for resource-extraction industries, continued in that role as Interior Secretary. When she left, she got a highly paid job with Shell Oil.

Undersecretary Steve Griles, former lobbyist for the coal and oil industries, was sentenced by a federal court to 10 months in prison and a \$30,000 fine for lying to a Senate committee about his ties to high-rolling lobbyist and notorious crook Jack Abramoff.

Assistant Secretary Julie MacDonald (over the Fish and Wildlife Service) fought against endangered species protections, radically censored reports from FWS scientists and handed internal agency documents to energy industry lobbyists. Deputy Assistant Secretary Paul Hoffman (over the National Park

Service) pushed for more snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park and for ORVs throughout the park system.

Department of Agriculture

Under Secretary Mark Rey (over the Forest Service), former vice president of the American Forest and Paper Association, pushed to overturn the Roadless Area Rule and for more logging on national forests.

TRUMP VS. REAGAN AND BUSH/CHENEY CHALLENGES

Let’s shuffle Trump’s oddities off to the side and weigh him conservation-wise against Reagan and Bush/Cheney. How do his policies and appointments so far stack up?

I’d say some are better and some are worse. Some of Reagan’s and Bush’s appointments were as bad as Trump’s. I’d argue that Ryan Zinke as Secretary of Interior is better than James Watt or Gale Norton. However, Scott Pruitt at EPA may be even worse than Ann Gorsuch or Stephen Johnson.

1. We don’t know what the next level of appointees will be. In many ways, the assistant secretaries over the FWS, NPS, USFS, NOAA, Geological Survey, etc., are more important than the department secretaries.
2. Please remember, Trump’s stand on keeping public lands federal was better than any of the other GOP presidential nomination contenders. Trump is also better on keeping the public lands than are nearly all the Republicans in Congress.
3. Trump’s family may be a moderating influence on some of his policies. For example, Donald Trump, Jr., is a life member of the Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, one of the most conservation-minded hunting/fishing groups. BHA has a good relationship with Zinke, as does Don, Jr. During the Reagan and Bush/Cheney administrations, Democrats controlled one or both houses of Congress. With Trump, Republicans are in control of both houses. This is bad. The failure of Democrats to recapture the Senate, in my mind, is (almost) as bad as losing the presidency.
4. During the Reagan Administration, there were still Republican members of Congress who were pro-public lands, Wilderness Areas, endangered species, clean air and water, and so on. During Bush/Cheney, such Republican members of Congress were fewer and mostly weaker, but there still were some. Now, we don’t have that. Inexplicably to me, Republican congressional members are in lock-step with the Tea Party and extractive industries in backing the great giveaway of public lands to the states or private ownership and want to abolish the EPA and the Endangered Species Act. This is new, and very, very bad.
5. Under both Reagan and Bush/Cheney, conservationists and environmentalists stopped the worst measures. The takeaway is this: We’ve been here before and have stopped the worst attacks on public lands and wildlife. We can do it again if we keep our focus on wild things and do not get discouraged. 📌

Looking to  
volunteer in  
wilderness?

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

Photos: Mark Allison



## New Mexico Wild Calls on Outdoor Retailers to Make New Mexico Home



The Organ Mountains just east of Las Cruces are drawing more and more visitors to southern New Mexico since the designation of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. Right, A boy and his grandfather enjoy a hike at Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument, a popular destination within easy reach of Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Photos: Tisha Broska

A bipartisan group of legislators in the New Mexico Senate and House of Representatives joined forces during the 2017 legislative session to boost jobs in the growing outdoor recreation industry in New Mexico.

House Memorial 92 and Senate Memorial 130 invited the nation's largest outdoor industry trade show, Outdoor Retailer, to relocate to New Mexico. Sens. Jeff Steinborn, D-Las Cruces, and Sander Rue, R-Albuquerque, and Reps. Nathan Small, D-Las Cruces, and Jason Harper, R-Rio Rancho, introduced the legislation to expand the state's economic development efforts related to growing the outdoor recreation industry.

"With this legislation we want to send a clear message that New Mexicans love their public lands and we welcome tourists and businesses alike involved in the outdoor recreation industry to locate in New Mexico," said Steinborn.

"New Mexico offers world class public lands and values shared by our outdoor retailers," Small said. "To grow our economy we must maximize these strengths. Our incredible land, culture, and quality of life provide us a robust potential for creating new jobs and opportunities."

New Mexico currently has a thriving outdoor recreation economy, supporting 68,000 jobs and generating more than \$450 million in tax revenue each year. The state Tourism Department's *New Mexico True* campaign invests heavily in promoting the state's vast natural resources.

The semiannual Outdoor Retailer show draws approximately 29,000 attendees from around the world and creates direct spending of approximately \$45 million. It has been held in Salt Lake City for the past two decades, but organizers recently announced their desire to switch locations in response to Utah's intent to sell off large swaths of public lands.

"As a Boy Scout leader and avid camper, I enjoy sharing the stunning vistas and deep history of our beautiful New Mexico ... we are a perfect destination for the Outdoor Retailers trade show and outdoor manufacturers," Harper said.

"New Mexicans' deep connection to their land provide a perfect synergy to growing this important economic market. From hiking, hunting and fishing, to skiing, climbing and camping, you can't beat what New Mexico has to offer," Rue added.

U.S. Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., sent a letter to the organizers urging them to come to New Mexico. "New Mexicans ... share my unwavering commitment to protecting our natural heritage for our children and for generations to come, and know firsthand that conservation and growing the economy are inextricably linked (and the) protection of our great outdoors is among the pillars of New Mexico values."

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance applauds the efforts of our elected officials, which stand in such contrast to the hostility towards public lands and short-sightedness of Utah's politicians. We invite the organizers to come visit so they can personally experience the rich cultural heritage, wonderful cuisine and the hospitality and generosity of spirit of our people that truly make New Mexico the "Land of Enchantment." 🏔️

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!



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

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# WOLF UPDATE

## Legal Actions Continue to Challenge Wolf Management

By Judy Calman, Staff

As one of the rarest animals in North America and a symbol of American wilderness, the wolf has been an important part of our advocacy since our founding 20 years ago. The wolf faces hurdles from all angles: from an unfriendly governor here in New Mexico, from poachers and from an increasingly hostile Congress. 2016 was the deadliest year ever in the history of the Mexican gray wolf reintroduction program, with 14 confirmed deaths. Illegal shooting remains the highest cause of mortality for the animals.

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance continues its efforts to protect the endangered wolf in every way we can. This has included advocating for Gila protection, opposing Congressional efforts to delist wolves or degrade the Endangered Species Act (something we anticipate may unfortunately increase in the new Congress and administration) and participating in several lawsuits outlined below.

### State of New Mexico v. Fish and Wildlife Service

Last year, the New Mexico Game Commission denied the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's application to release captive-bred wolves into the state. The Fish and Wildlife Service had applied for the permit as a courtesy, since it is not required to secure state permission to release an endangered species on federal land. After being denied a

permit, the agency decided, we believe correctly, to release wolves anyway.

Despite the clear legal authority for them to release wolves without the state's permission, New Mexico sued the Fish and Wildlife Service for what it calls "obstruction of its wildlife management authority."

New Mexico Wild, along with several other conservation groups, successfully intervened in the lawsuit on behalf of the Fish and Wildlife Service in July.

The state of New Mexico successfully sought a preliminary injunction, which is currently preventing the service from releasing additional wolves. Oral argument on the injunction was heard at the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals in January, and we are currently awaiting an order from the court. Hopefully, the injunction will be lifted so that the Fish and Wildlife Service can release more wolves in New Mexico this year while the substantive portions of the lawsuit are litigated.

### McKittrick Policy

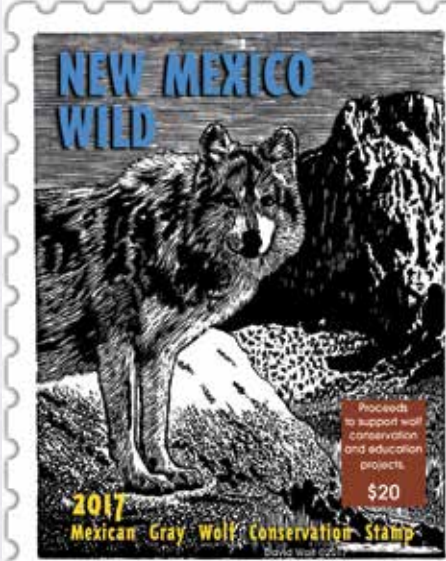
New Mexico Wild also continues its fight to overturn the Department of Justice's so-called McKittrick policy, an internal agency policy which prevents the department from prosecuting anyone for Endangered Species Act violations unless it can prove the person knew the exact biological identity of the species they were harming.

While the case has been moving slowly since we filed it in 2013, we have survived the department's motion to dismiss, which means the court believes substantive arguments should be heard. We filed a summary judgment brief in January, and we anticipate having a summary judgment hearing sometime this year.

### Fish and Wildlife Service Management Rule

Changes to the Fish and Wildlife Service's Mexican wolf management rule were finalized in January 2015. Despite expansion of the wolves' territory and the new ability for the service to release wolves directly into New Mexico, the updated rule also has a downside. It greatly expands the circumstances in which people can kill wolves and does not reconsider the wild population's classification as "non-essential," which prevents them from having critical protections.

We decided in June 2015 to challenge the rule in court, along with our colleagues at WildEarth Guardians, Friends of Animals and the Western Environmental Law Center. This case has been consolidated with legal actions filed by Center for Biological Diversity, Defenders of Wildlife and the state of Arizona and is ongoing. Since we filed the lawsuit, the Fish and Wildlife Service committed to completing a new recovery plan by November 2017 as part of a settlement in another matter. 🐾



Clockwise from top left: winning entry by David Wait; honorable mentions by Susan Miller, Venice Tovino, Sydney Gilder and Jerry Rael.

**Artist David Wait's wood engraving is the winning entry in the 2017 Mexican Wolf Conservation Stamp contest.** Artists worldwide were invited to enter two-dimensional drawings, paintings or photographs featuring the endangered Mexican gray wolf. The stamp is sold as a framing-quality print to raise funds to support Mexican wolf conservation and education projects.

Wait has been making wood engravings for 15 years, an outgrowth of the handmade fine furniture he has been making more than three decades. His wood engravings reflect his love of the natural environment and the Southwest. They are small images, engraved in the end grain of hard wood blocks and printed on a hand-operated wooden press. David and his wife live in a small off-grid home by the Gila National Forest near Silver City.

Honorable mentions in the wolf stamp contest went to Susan Miller, Taos Academy sixth-grader Venice Tovino, Jerry Rael and 6-year-old Santa Fe resident Sydney Gilder.

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance issued its first collectable stamp in 2011. The program is similar to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's duck stamp, which funds wetlands conservation, but is not related to hunting. To purchase the 4.5- by 5.5-inch stamp from this year or a previous year for \$20, go to [nmwild.org/shop/purchase-wolf-stamp](http://nmwild.org/shop/purchase-wolf-stamp).



# UPCOMING EVENTS: You are invited!



**April 22-August 2017 | Pecos Wilderness and Santa Fe National Forest Volunteer Service Projects:** We will be surveying, clearing and conducting trail maintenance of La Vega Loop trails, Winsor Trail to the Wilderness boundary and Aspen Basin Campground. **Check the website for dates and email [Bernie@nmwild.org](mailto:Bernie@nmwild.org) for more information.**



**May 14, 2017, 5-6:30 p.m. | Bachechi Open Space, 9521 Rio Grande NW, Albuquerque:** Safeguarding our Natural and Cultural Heritage in a Hostile Environment. Mark Allison, executive director of New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, will be talking about New Mexico's wild public lands and Wilderness areas. **Free.**



**May 20, 2017 | Rio Grande Paddle – Bernalillo to Albuquerque:** Join New Mexico Wild and Quiet Waters Paddling to explore the primitive aspects of the lifeline of New Mexico from Bernalillo to the Alameda Bridge in Albuquerque (water level permitting). Our experienced guides and

conservationists will provide history and discuss important issues about this highly managed, but gorgeous stretch of the Rio Grande. This trip will be an easy paddle down the river. **Go to [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org) for more details and online registration.**



**June 3, 2017, 9 a.m.-2 p.m. | National Trails Day Service Project – New Mexico Wild-sponsored event:** Celebrate the American Hiking Society's annual event to encourage Americans to enjoy the outdoors by helping the Santa Fe National Forest make much-needed improvements on the Winsor Trail from Aspen Basin to

"Wilderness Gate" on the boundary of the Pecos Wilderness. Participants will receive free t-shirts and other swag. **Email [Bernie@nmwild.org](mailto:Bernie@nmwild.org) for more information and to RSVP.**



**June 10, 2017 | Taos Middle Box Hike and Rafting:** Explore a scenic Class II-III section of river visited by far fewer people every summer than the popular Taos Box and Lower Gorge. A one-mile hike will take us from the rim of the gorge into the heart of the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument. Attendees should be fit enough for the hike downhill into the canyon. **Go to [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org) for more details and online registration.**



**June 18-21, 2017 | Summer Solstice at Chaco Canyon:** This four-day, hiking-intensive adventure will explore some of northwestern New Mexico's most unique natural and cultural landscapes. We'll hike the lava fields of El Malpais National Monument and the surreal badlands in the Bisti/De-na-zin Wilderness

then finish the trip at Chaco Culture National Historical Park during the summer solstice to see astroarcheology in action. **Go to [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org) for more details and online registration.**



**Aug. 6, 2017 | Chama River Day Trip:** This 10-mile Rio Chama rafting trip begins near the tranquil setting of the Christ in the Desert Monastery and ends at the head of Abiquiú Reservoir on a beautiful desert river, rolling among the rainbow cliffs. **Go to [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org) for more details and online registration.**



**Aug. 20, 2017, 11 a.m. | Journey Santa Fe Talk with Author Philip Connors:** event at Collected Works Bookstore. Journey Santa Fe is a weekly gathering of progressive-minded individuals who explore issues that influence our daily lives and the lives of future generations in New Mexico. Philip Connors' first book, "Fire Season," was about his time as a fire lookout in the Gila

Wilderness. His second book, "All the Wrong Places," a memoir of life in the shadow of his brother's suicide, was published in 2015. **Free**



**Sept. 10, 2017, 9:30 a.m. | Rio Grande Paddle – Algodones to Corrales:** Join New Mexico Wild and Quiet Waters Paddling to explore the primitive aspects of the lifeline of New Mexico from Algodones to Corrales (weather permitting). Our experienced guides will provide history and discuss important issues about this gorgeous stretch of the Rio

Grande. Enjoy the fall colors along the bosque! **Go to [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org) for more details and online registration.**

The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance is partnering with the U.S. Forest Service to host six Wilderness Rangers for the 2017 field season between May and September. The rangers will coordinate work in Wilderness areas within the Cibola, Santa Fe and Carson national forests. A variety of volunteer service projects will be scheduled to accomplish monitoring requirements needed for Forest Service Wilderness Stewardship Performance elements, including invasive species, trails, solitude and primitive and unconfined recreation. Please check the events schedule at [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org) for a list of upcoming volunteer opportunities.

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

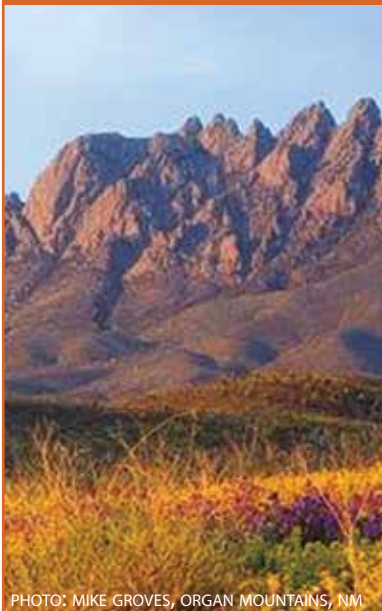


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- Your monthly donation helps us keep working all year long.
- Your credit card is automatically billed each month, nothing to remember or mail.
- You set your donation amount—as little as \$10 a month makes a difference!
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- 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 Wilderness Alliance Yes! I want to support Wilderness in New Mexico!

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

**I want to support New Mexico Wild with a single gift.**

- ☐ \$25    ☐ \$100    ☐ \$1,000  
☐ \$35    ☐ \$250    ☐ Other amount \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ \$50    ☐ \$500

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

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**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 matted selection of Wolf Stamps!

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

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

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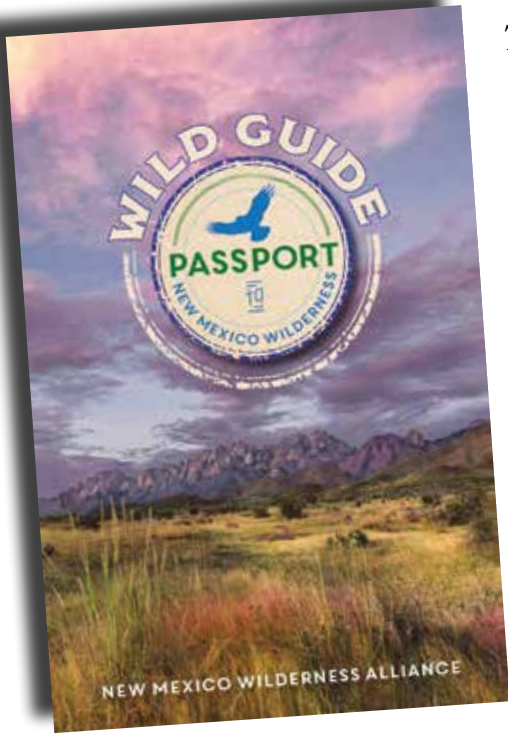
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Mail your tax-deductible donation to: New Mexico Wilderness Alliance | PO Box 25464 Albuquerque, NM 87125 | Questions? 505.843.8696, ext 104 or join online at [nmwild.org](http://nmwild.org)



# If You Love Wilderness, You Need This Book!

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

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



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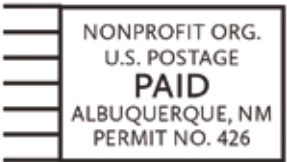


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Sandia Rainbow