



Member Advisory Newsletter

Chaco: new hope in an ancient land

From your Executive Director....

Let me start this Advisory with a request. You may have heard that the Biden Administration has proposed establishing a 10-mile-wide zone around the Chaco Culture National Historical Park, which would end oil and gas drilling leases for 20 years. This would be a remarkable help in protecting these precious lands. This is a huge victory and one we have been working towards for years.

Among the good news here is that the decision will certainly mean greater consultation with area Tribes and Pueblo Nations who have a deep historic connection to this region. In this issue of our Member Advisory, we'll tell you five of the many reasons that Chaco matters. On the back side of this page, you will find the map showing active oil wells around Chaco shocking. We will continue to work toward permanent protection for Chaco.

Now for the request. We need as many members as possible to express their support for this proposed protection during the 90-day public comment period, which ends on April 5, 2022. We've included some talking points you may want to use in your comments.

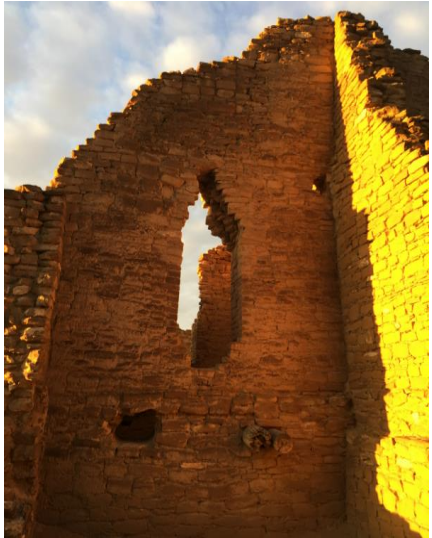
Your continued support makes our work for Chaco and other public lands in New Mexico possible. Thank you!

Mark Allison
Executive Director
New Mexico Wild



Why Chaco matters

Chaco is worth fighting for, and we see significant protections in sight. We thought you would appreciate why we think this region should be protected from the intense drilling happening in this part of the state.



NATIVE CULTURES

The land of the Chaco Region provides a spiritual and ancestral home for many sovereign Pueblos and Tribes and continues to be important today. With Secretary Haaland's commitment to involving indigenous communities in management decisions, we believe the ability to respect and protect native cultures will be enhanced.

CLIMATE PROTECTION

Over 90% of the public land in the Chaco Region is already leased for oil and gas drilling. The climate impacts of burning more fossil fuels are well understood. Then there is the climate impact of methane releases to consider. The Chaco Region today has 23,000 active wells. With BLM proposing to withdraw 351,480 acres of federal lands/minerals around Chaco, no new wells will be allowed in the 10-mile zone.

WILDLIFE

While the focus for many is on the historic features of Greater Chaco, this is a region with abundant wildlife that has already been harmed by development. The canyon hosts coyote, mule deer, elk, pronghorn, bobcats, badgers, foxes, and two species of skunk. Despite its arid nature, the

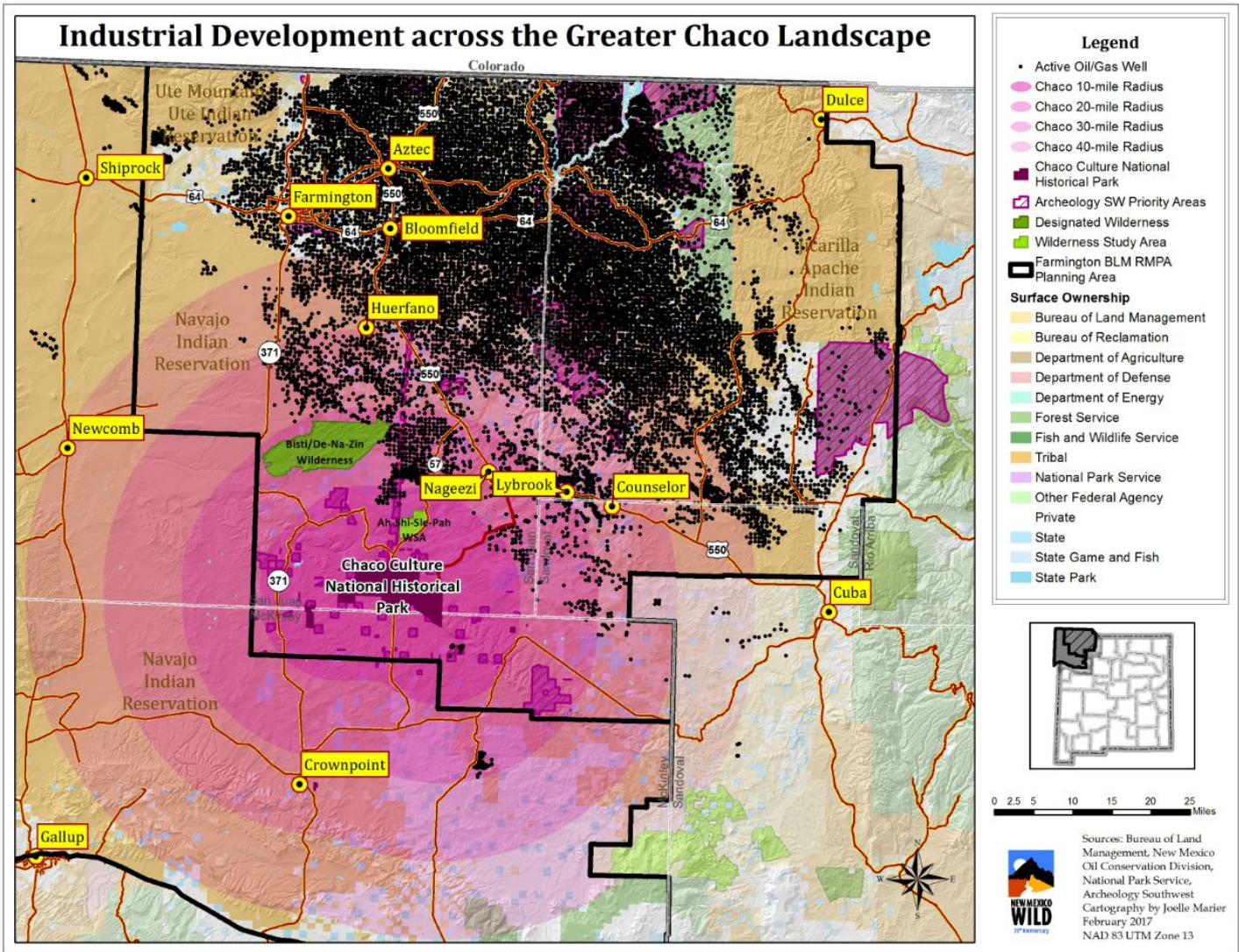
region has sizeable populations of small birds, including three species of hummingbirds. Our mission at New Mexico Wild is to protect Wilderness, Wildlife, and Water on our public lands and Chaco is one of our top priorities.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

We only know a fraction of what there is to learn from archaeological sites in the Greater Chaco Region. The National Historical Park alone has an estimated 4,000 archaeological sites. Beyond that, thousands of ancient roads, villages, and shrines surround the Park.

TOURISM

In the years ahead, as our state's dependence on oil and gas revenues declines, tourism will become an even greater economic development strategy for the state. Chaco offers visitors a UNESCO World Heritage Site, one of only 24 in the country. While tourism can be challenging to sensitive sites like Chaco, it can also be used to create both awareness and revenue to help protect the area.



The Chaco Culture National Historical Park is at the center of the concentric circles. The proposed buffer zone is the innermost circle at a 10-mile radius. The black dots represent the 23,000 active oil and gas wells in the region. More than 90% of the public lands in the Chaco Region have been leased for oil and gas drilling.

Urgent Request from New Mexico Wild

Please lend your support to Chaco by providing input during the 90-day public comment period ending on April 5, 2022. Go to <https://bit.ly/Chaco2022>



Please support our work for Chaco and other public lands in our state.

Donate with the enclosed reply card or at:

NMWILD.ORG

New Mexico Wilderness Alliance / PO Box 25464 / Albuquerque, NM 87125 / 505-843-8696