



Introducing a new volunteer program to help defend wildlands

From your Executive Director....



In this past year's annual report, we took a deep look at what it means to be a grassroots organization. We are on the ground, getting our hands dirty and our boots wet in our work to protect the public lands of New Mexico. Yes, we also work on Capitol Hill and in the Roundhouse, but what really distinguishes New Mexico Wild is that we have thousands of members who know and care for our Wilderness, Wildlife, and Water. With that grassroots work in mind,

we're excited to announce the creation of a new volunteer group we are calling "**Wilderness Defenders.**" In this Advisory, we'll tell you about how these volunteers will help protect our most sensitive public lands. We'd welcome your support either with donations to help cover the cost of this new program or signing on as a Defender yourself.

Your past contributions have made this protection program and so many others possible. Thank you!

Mark Allison
Executive Director
New Mexico Wild

Why is New Mexico Wild creating the new Wilderness Defenders program?

Gathering information on the condition of wildlands is the goal of our Wilderness Defenders. We plan to use volunteers to provide New Mexico Wild and public land agencies with current information regarding selected locales that are often difficult to reach without a good hike. For example, volunteers will visit Wilderness Study Areas that may warrant new designations or protections. These volunteers will routinely hike these areas and gather information on conditions including trails, campsites, signage, facilities, visitor use, and other maintenance concerns as well as habitat health indicators such as presence of grazing cattle, riparian quality, signs of recent fires, and similar observations.

We want volunteers who will cultivate a relationship with their designated area and help monitor its Wilderness value and condition. This information will be useful as we advocate for greater levels of protection.



How many volunteers are needed?

With more than 36 million acres of public land in the state, we can use all the boots on the ground that are available. Over time, we hope to build the Wilderness Defender volunteers to over 100 members.

What areas of the state will the Defenders work in?

We plan to send volunteers to every corner of the state and everywhere in between. We have initially identified 53 Wilderness Study Areas and other public lands that would benefit from the collection of information on conditions.

What are the requirements or qualifications to join the program?

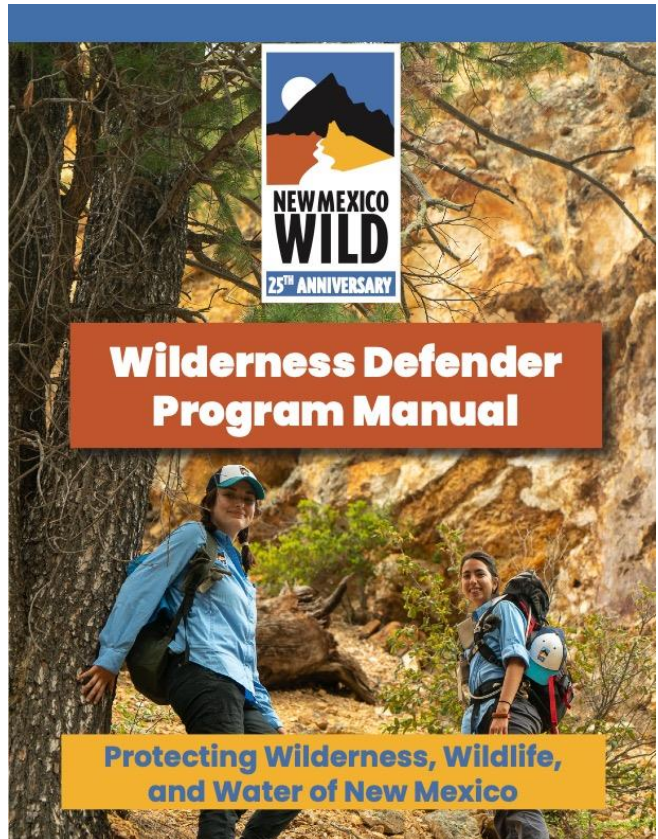
You need to be comfortable hiking in remote areas and have a sturdy car or truck that can travel rough dirt roads. We can match volunteers to less challenging terrain as well.

How will this program link to the Wilderness Rangers program?

We've been proud to field a small corps of Wilderness Rangers over the past five years in partnership with the US Forest Service. This new program will provide substantial additional scale. In addition, Wilderness Defenders can monitor public lands not managed by USFS.

Will there be training for new Wilderness Defenders?

Yes. We will conduct a training for volunteers to instruct them on the information they will



be collecting, how they will collect it, and how to report back to us. Training should take less than an hour and can be done over the phone. Anyone with a smartphone or GPS unit and camera can collect information.

If I want to volunteer or donate, what is the next step?

To volunteer, visit our website and complete an application. A New Mexico Wild staff member will reach out to discuss the program in more detail. To provide a donation for this and other New Mexico Wild programs, use the enclosed reply card or donate online at nmwild.org.

For the latest information on the Wilderness Defenders program, please visit nmwild.org/volunteer

Hiking season is on! Try New Mexico Wild's free online hiking guide. 100 of the best trails in our state's Wilderness areas.

<https://hike.nmwild.org>



Please support our land and water protection work.

Donate with the enclosed reply card or at:

NMWILD.ORG

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