

Origins of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

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Introduction

America lost Dave Foreman in the early evening of September 19. The cause was an incurable lung ailment, one of several disabling maladies that dogged him during his final years. His sister, Roxanne Pacheco, other family, and close friends were there. Others, scattered around the nation, were on their way hoping to arrive in time with their personal messages of support and affection. Those who knew him well held him in esteem justified by his lived values and a record of achievement recorded in Bob Howard's remembrance:¹

"Dave Foreman's valuing of wildness, vision of what might be, understanding of conservation biology, and a lifetime's scholarly work produced four organizations--Earth First!, North American Wilderness Recovery/The Rewilding Institute, The Wildlands Project/Network, and New Mexico Wilderness Alliance/NMWild--as well as a seminal book, a worldwide rewilding movement, and protective designation of over a million acres of Wilderness. That is an especially rich and profound legacy! New Mexico Wild is a primary beneficiary of that legacy, and Dave's values, vision, understanding and passionate activism are in the organization's DNA."

Dave's passing made the national news. He had spent his adult life inspiring Americans to protect their unspoiled landscapes and its wildlife. He did it well. Dave will be remembered for his attention-getting, most famous creation, the radical, barely organized conservation organization he named Earth First!² Of lesser known, but of longer-lasting importance, was his science-oriented collaboration with Michael Soulé, Reed Noss, Doug Tompkins, John Davis and others in the Wildlands Project/Network starting in 1991.³ He followed that with the creation of the Rewilding Institute in 2003, again joined by John Davis and with the help of Bob Howard and Dave Parsons.⁴ His wife, Nancy Morton, and collaborator Susan Morgan were significantly involved in these endeavors, more than is usually recognized.⁵

Earth First! generated a series of head-on collisions between grassroots wilderness activists and their nemeses attacking the unroaded public domain, principally timber interests, miners, road builders, land developers, dam constructors, and wayward agency land managers. During the 1980's Reaganism, the "wise use" movement, and the "Sagebrush Rebellion" encouraged and created multiple threats to wildlands at the same time that mainstream conservation organizations were backing away from their grassroots connection. Those grassroots, the very people made anxious and trying to prevent esthetic and ecological damage to their neighborhoods and the homeland they loved, found their boat cut adrift with heavy weather arriving. The 1980's delivered perfect conditions for spawning and growing a rebellious fish like Earth First!.⁶

Early Conservation Experience in New Mexico

Before there was an Earth First! Dave Foreman was spending the first twelve years of his adult life in New Mexico.⁷ In New Mexico he stuck a toe into the waters of conservation activism, first as a volunteer with the Black Mesa Defense Fund in 1971, then with River Defense.⁸ He submerged an ankle as Wilderness Director for the Albuquerque Environmental Center, and in 1972 reached full immersion as a hyperactive volunteer with the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee.⁹ That year he met Bob and Phyllis Howard, newly-arrived medical professionals and active members of the Sierra Club. At the time Foreman was attending executive meetings of the Rio Grande Chapter representing the Albuquerque Environmental Center and the Howards began attending also. Through the Sierra Club and the Environmental Center the Howards met and became friendly with Dave and his girlfriend and future wife, Debbie Sease in the fall of 1972. At that time they also met Bill and Judy Bishop. The three couples soon became fast friends, hiking and getting together. Their talk during those days often turned to wildland conservation and strategies for achieving it. They all regularly attended the meetings of the Sierra Club's Rio Grande Chapter where they met Wesley Leonard, chair of the El Paso Group of the chapter, and Brant Calkin, formerly a chapter board chair and now the Regional Representative of the Sierra Club. Bob recalled that they would all frequently engage in "rump sessions" after Sierra Club meetings where issues, events, and strategy could be discussed in an informal atmosphere.¹⁰

The careers of the Howards and Dave and Debbie would take them away from New Mexico, but events would bring Dave and the Howards back together again two decades later when once again they would be meeting and hiking, and talking conservation strategy. Out of this association and the association with Susan Morgan and others would come the concepts and actions that created the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. Bob and Susan Morgan were, with Roxanne, daylong presences at his side and into the evening of September 19, 2022.¹¹

Working with the Wilderness Study Committee (WSC) gave Foreman valuable experience leading wilderness inventories and managing campaigns and communications with the press. These skills helped set him on a path that became his life's calling. At the time he joined the Wilderness Study Committee it was just beginning formal evaluations of New Mexico's national forests to determine where the characteristics defining wilderness existed. The process, termed inventorying, was already in progress within the public domain managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Their task was defined by the directives of the Wilderness Act of 1964. Early on the WSC had recognized the

need to make its own assessment of the state's wildlands to back up its positions on the appropriate the number, sizes, and boundaries for candidate wilderness areas. Foreman soon became one of its team leaders, assigned the task of evaluating the Gila and Apache National Forests. Within the Gila National Forest lay the nation's first formal wilderness, the Gila Wilderness Area, encompassing the expansive, canyon and gorge riven headwaters of the Gila River. The data, photographs, and findings of teams like his would become the material evidence backing WSC citizen proposals for wilderness areas as allowed under the Wilderness Act. The ambitious goal was to have enough information to draft bills ready for submission to Congress for every wilderness area candidate identified.¹²

Volunteers for these jobs were not hard to find. Plenty of backpackers and hikers relished the idea of exploring the forest wilds to determine what was there. In February 1975, anticipating that the Bureau of Land Management would soon come under the Wilderness Act, the WSC held a workshop in Las Cruces for 100 of its members and formed teams to begin evaluating BLM-managed public land for potential wilderness area candidates. This new evaluation brought the eager hiking and backpacking enthusiasts out again to scour the grasslands and arid mountains typical of most BLM wildland. Foreman was named statewide coordinator for the teams involved in this operation. Wesley Leonard, later a Wilderness Alliance founder and long-time board chair, remembers Foreman as his mentor and was the team leader for inventories of the Las Cruces BLM District.¹³

Foreman entered the WSC as a ready and able volunteer, exploring the landscape on his own and leading hiking and backpacking parties of volunteers into the backcountry to map roads and boundaries and document where wilderness characteristics were found. He loved the work and he enjoyed spending time with people who shared his values. His imagination, enthusiasm, and leadership skills caught the attention of The Wilderness Society (TWS). In 1973 he was invited to attend one of their week-long training sessions for volunteers in Washington D.C. Once there he was exposed to lessons on the inner workings of Congress and how to lobby and interact with its members. He made a second good impression on TWS management and afterwards he was offered a \$250-a-month position as the New Mexico field representative later expanded to include the southwest. This, for Dave, was a dream job at any salary. He accepted and, with his future first wife, Debbie Sease, moved into a little stone house south of the tiny village of Glenwood and near the northwestern edge of the Gila Wilderness. There he assumed the triple roles of Wilderness Society employee, Wilderness Study Committee activist, and the locally-assumed threat to the ranching and logging community. He handled all three by doing good work, being honest and fair, and remaining unintimidated by the opposition.¹⁴

Dave's new job had him reporting to Susan Morgan, the TWS Denver Office coordinator for state field representatives across the West. "All these rowdies" she calls them, then elaborates:

"They were a wonderful bunch, just once removed from the founders of The Wilderness Society. They were all dedicated, inspired, and on a mission, all of them. They are still all working in conservation. ... Dave was this wild guy. ... He was full blown manic at the time and he could put the work out. He was so much fun, and he was so effective, always trying something new, and so it was an experience to know him then too. He was a good guy."¹⁵

The Wilderness Study Committee had similar experiences with Dave, some revealed in his writing. His one-page memos to WSC colleagues and those he was sending to the field on inventory excursions might have no margins. Hand written or typed, text filled the white space with his ideas, observations, directions, instructions, the latest news, or whatever else he felt was important. Sometime his signature, small and cocked, was squeezed into a lower corner because that was the only white space left. Dave was inspirational and effective, willing to do whatever he asked of others. In April 1975 he was elected chairman of the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee. Less than two years later TWS headquarters struck again, transferring him to its Washington D.C. office to become Coordinator of Wilderness Affairs. During his sojourn in Washington he arranged for Bob Langsencamp, a capable and popular conservationist from Silver City, to take his place as TWS southwest representative. Later Langsencamp would figure prominently in the creation and leadership of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

Dave's new elevated position found him, among other things, taking on a lobbying role as the go-between for grassroots organizations, other lobbyists, and Congress. He was in the big city with white collar job, one Susan said, "he just wasn't cut out for." Worse, in 1979 the TWS grassroots program was eliminated and his buddies, the field reps, were all laid off. Foreman was given the opportunity to return his old job in New Mexico which he accepted. Previously Dave and Debbie had amicably divorced, so he moved alone back to the little stone house south of Glenwood. Debbie had a good job with TWS and stayed on in Washington. She would later move over to the Sierra Club where she would rise to become National Campaign Director.

Susan's Denver office job had been eliminated also. She didn't want the position in D.C. that was offered and left The Wilderness Society. Disillusioned by his Washington experience and the new direction TWS and the other national organizations were taking, Dave resigned after a few months and embarked on a soul-searching journey to Mexico with his former TWS "buckaroo" buddies. On the drive back they began exploring concepts for a new radical conservation organization that Foreman called "Earth First."¹⁶ After more consultation with a wider audience that included Susan Morgan, the "rowdies," and other like-minded contacts, Dave Foreman and Howie Wolke announced the birth of Earth First! in the summer of 1981.¹⁷

Earth First!

Earth First! was demonstrably on the side of the grassroots and not interested in the D.C.-centric negotiating-compromising-deal-making-settle for less process adopted by the large national organizations. Earth First! made frequent headlines in local, regional, and national news by exposing and physically opposing the assault on public wildlands being carried out by a myriad of sources. Earth First's physical, on-the-ground vanguard was mostly young and often long-haired, but it also attracted a surprising number of professionals and average Janes and Joes. Their principal weapons were their ideas and their commitment backed up by their bodies, blocking roads, facing down trucks and heavy equipment, and obstructing workers trying to get to their job site. Their most dramatic tactic was tree sitting, the act of setting up housekeeping on a tiny platform built high in a conifer otherwise destined to become lumber or wood chips.¹⁸

Less frequently, Earth First!ers engaged in the sabotage of the opposition's equipment or facilities and paid the price with fines and jail time if caught.¹⁹ In Foreman's case, it meant

becoming the FBI's target of an entrapment and sting operation in 1989 that produced a charge of conspiracy to down power lines in Arizona. That caused him two years of legal headaches but introduced him to mountaineering and wilderness activists Doug Tompkins, creator of Esprit and North Face clothing giants and the Foundation for Deep Ecology, and Yvon Chouinard, founder and head of Patagonia outdoor clothing and a foundation of the same name. The two urged Gary Spence, prominent defense attorney and Chouinard's neighbor, to take on Foreman's case, which he did pro bono. Tompkins and Chouinard then covered the other costs necessary to support court proceedings, including paying for staff, witness transportation, and hotel fees. After Spence exposed FBI deception and deceit a plea agreement was reached with prosecutors. That ended the tiresome, anxiety-inducing litigation and yielded a September 1991 settlement that amounted to serving a five year suspended sentence for a misdemeanor. Acts of "monkey wrenching" or "ecotage," as it was called, caused its practitioners, Foreman, and Earth First! to be branded as eco-terrorists by those they opposed and a press that often didn't dig deeper.²⁰

The effectiveness of Earth First! is sometimes downplayed as being little more than a scattering of local protests and stunts by a small contingent of radicals that saved a relatively small amount of real estate from degradation and destruction. This analysis ignores that it was never the objective of Earth First! to achieve its goals only by stunts and physical confrontation. That was the theater and the last resort to impending egregious destruction. Its consistent goal was to expose and draw American's attention to the growing onslaught on the nation's wildlands and wildlife, and the failure of corporate conservation giants to mount an adequate defense. The result of that awareness raised indignation and prompted citizen action in the form of public outcries that moved politicians and agencies to act and, in some cases, offending private businesses to negotiate. Furthermore, direct physical intervention was not Earth First!'s only approach. When legal action appeared the better route, Earth First! took it. When negotiation might produce the wanted outcome, it participated. Earth First! could, with its theater and sometimes-outrageous propaganda, intentionally jolt the public into asking itself the questions, "Is this assault on Nature right,? Is this what we really want?" After getting public agreement to two "no's" for answers the ground was fertile for getting citizens to speak up, contact their Congressman, and take action, direct action if considered necessary.²¹

Earth First! drew battle lines around every wildland and critical wildlife habitat remaining in America. With so many potential problems, attention-getting physical conflict involving troop deployments favored the worst insults, such as logging the last great stands of the redwoods and invading the commercially lucrative old growth forests of the Pacific Northwest. Here the stakes were so high there was no alternative but to fight the good fight on the ground.²²

Earth First! shined a spotlight on government agency policies that allowed and even promoted anti-environmental activities. Special displeasure was directed at the U.S. Forest Service with its long-range plan to sell practically every tree that could profitably be "harvested" in certain of our national forests. While the harvesting was incremental and said to be sustainable, it reduced biological diversity in favor of fast-growing species such as Douglas fir and would eventually wipe out nearly all of the nation's remaining magnificent stands of large, old growth timber.²³

Earth First! was only one of many parties willing to file suit against the government over wilderness issues. The basis for legal action could be the terms of the Wilderness Act itself, but

more often hinged on the plethora of environmental laws written in succeeding years that created regulations designed to protect the environment or endangered species. The Reagan administration with its often-blind support of resource extraction and the related "Sagebrush Rebellion" and "wise use" movement fueled a great deal of legal activity. The two approaches, one based on confrontation and civil disobedience, the other on the traditional exercise of legal remedies were common tactics used during the civil rights and antiwar movements of the preceding two decades. Earth First! adopted both. By the early 1990's the courts had affirmed the legitimacy and broad vision behind the Wilderness Act and the environmental laws passed in the 60's and 70's. Federal land management policy, wildlife protections, and public sentiment were turning, if unevenly, in favor of more protection and preservation. Earth First! played a useful role in that growing transformation.

Early in his tenure as the public face of Earth First! Dave met Nancy Morton, a pretty, young activist who was to become his second wife and the stable center of his sometimes-chaotic life. Their paths crossed in 1983 when he came to Chico, California on an organizing trip. She was a nursing school undergraduate at the time, a leader of the local campaign to establish an Ishi Wilderness Area, and collaborator on other wilderness campaigns in northwest California. The two were attracted to each other and, a few months later, Dave moved from his temporary residence with a friend in Ely, Nevada to Chico. After Nancy graduated she took up nursing in a Chico hospital and the two were married in 1984 at the annual Earth First! Round River Rendezvous. Later they moved to Tucson so that she could enroll in a masters degree program at the University of Arizona. After receiving her degree Nancy became an acute and critical care nurse in the university hospital. Then, after spending nearly a decade in Tucson, Nancy accepted a teaching position with the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.²⁴

A New Direction

A decade after founding Earth First! Dave Foreman, joined by Nancy Morton, declared his original purpose in creating the organization largely fulfilled.²⁵ It was time to move on and he was joined by John Davis, editor of *Earth First! Journal*. With financial assistance from Doug Tompkins' Foundation for Deep Ecology Foreman and Davis initiated publication of *Wild Earth* in 1991, a new magazine devoted to the conservation and conservation science. Dave was at a turning point in his life and signaling that he was embarking on a deeper and more reflective kind of activism. After years of struggling for wildland preservation he began directing his attention to the steps needed to assure that Nature survived in meaningful ways, ways that preserved the wild biome and its species in sustainable quantities. His religion became conservation biology, and his creation became rewilding, his term for expanding former wildlands by restoring and maintaining their original conditions.²⁶

Conservation biology was revealing that plant and animal species in isolated wilderness areas, even when large, often do not have enough gene pool diversity to indefinitely sustain themselves. Disease or environmental disruption that might reduce a genetically diverse population can wipe out one that is genetically narrow and not resistant to the nature of the physical assault. In any ecosystem, the effects of losing one or a few "key species" can create, over time, catastrophic losses in other species and unrecoverable damage to the system as a whole. These key species are often large animals and those are often carnivores. Before 1492 intermingling of populations of a single specie, plant or animal, was limited only by its ability to migrate. Now nature-on-its-

own is restricted to islands of wilderness where genetic diversity may be low and migration to another area with a different gene pool is difficult, if not impossible. Assuring biological survival makes it necessary to assure that some connectivity, or corridors between wilderness areas be established and maintained if Nature is to remain healthy and sustainable.²⁷

In 1988 Dave Foreman and David Brower, the first executive director of the Sierra Club and founder of the Earth Island Institute, were been invited to the University of Michigan to give presentations. The two had often shared a stage in the past and knew each other well. The invitation was offered by Barbara Dugelby, a graduate student and former member of Earth First! now studying under Dr. Michael Soulé, founder and president of the Society for Conservation Biology. The morning after the presentations Dugelby took Foreman, Brower, and Soulé to breakfast. All were familiar with each other's work, and the ensuing conversation revealed shared interests that suggested collaboration. As Greg Hanscom put it, "In Foreman, Soulé saw the passion and the drive to take his science to the people. And in Soulé's science, Foreman saw the foundation for his vision."²⁸

Soulé and Foreman began communicating, perhaps casually at first, but with enough depth and frequency to keep the flame alive for another couple of years. Then, in the spring of 1991, Michael wrote Dave a letter. Frustrated with the thought that conservation had lost its vision and come to a dead end, he inquired "what's the next step?" He then suggested a small meeting involving conservation biologists and wilderness activists to explore the question.²⁹ Doug Tompkins and his Foundation for Deep Ecology were already bankrolling *Wild Earth* magazine and Tompkins was always looking for ways to accelerate conservation. When Foreman showed him Soulé's letter Tompkins seized on the Soulé's suggestion and urged him get the key people together and make a plan, offering his San Francisco home as the place for the meeting. Rod Mondt, an Arizona organizer, made the contacts and fifteen showed up in the fall of 1991 for a three-day strategy meeting, camping out on Tompkin's apparently spacious living room floor. About half of them were conservation biologists, probably selected by Soulé and Reed Noss. The rest were either activists, probably selected by Foreman and Davis, or friends of Tompkins outside the conservation community and known to be provocative thinkers.³⁰

Out of this gathering came the conclusion that a new organization was needed that could attack a central problem emerging from the findings of conservation biology: how to establish a network composed of large wildlands (core areas) connected by wildlife corridors. The corridors needed to be large enough and free enough of human interference to allow the physical movement of larger key species, especially carnivores. Such migration was recognized as necessary to enlarge the gene pool and its diversity thereby making the species involved more resistant to disease and other threats. The stability of these key species would then add stability to the entire biome.³¹ A small group emerged from this meeting calling itself the North American Wilderness Recovery Project centered around Reed Noss, Michael Soulé, John Davis, David Johns, and Dave Foreman. This group took on the immediate task of preparing a document that presented a mission statement, the problem chosen, and a plan to address it. Their 90-page draft became the basis for the Wildlands Project, a small non-profit staffed by conservation biologists and activists that encouraged and supported local organizations willing to attempt implementation of the plan. Helping fund the startup was, to no surprise, Tompkins' Foundation for Deep Ecology. The formal announcement of the Wildlands Project was made in

a 1992 *Wild Earth-Special Issue* titled "The Wildlands Project: Plotting a North American Wilderness Recovery Strategy"³²

Dave and Nancy must have been very busy during the next several years. Nancy was applying her recent M.S. (Nursing, Adult Health and Education) as an intensive care unit nurse with increased responsibilities. Dave, held an executive position with The Wildlands Project as board chair. His position and background would have him committed to spreading the word and helping educate the new Wildlands Project affiliates and the public. Affiliates typically were conservation organizations with little background in conservation biology. At the same time he was still serving as executive editor of *Wild Earth* and, on the side, updating *The Big Outside* with Howie Wolke and getting a second edition published. He also had columns to write for *Wild Earth*, and was sitting for interviews with Susan Zakin as she prepared her biography of him and his association with Earth First! titled *Coyotes and Town Dogs*.³³

A New Home in New Mexico

In 1994 Nancy obtained a teaching position at the University of New Mexico College of Nursing necessitating a move from Tucson to Albuquerque. This was a welcome development for her, as it would have meant more predictable hours and a clearer career path with means for advancement. She would rise to become the Undergraduate Program Director for the college.³⁴ Dave was returning to his home state filled with people and places he knew well and loved. A number of friends from his days with the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee were still in the area and still active in conservation. There was a lot to look forward to, including moving into the comfortable Mark Drive house near the foot of the Sandia Mountains. It would become their home for the rest of their lives.

1995 was a portentous year for a number of people in this story. That year brought a host of conservationists together again who had participated in earlier wilderness campaigns. Those campaigns added large amounts of wilderness, in numbers and acreages, to the state's totals in the late 1970's and early 1980's. The events of 1995 would set them on a course that would lead to the creation of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

Dave and Nancy had hardly settled in Albuquerque when Susan Morgan, previously living in Washington state, took up temporary residence near Madrid, only an hour's drive away. Then, in early 1995 Bob and Phyllenore Howard retired and moved back to New Mexico after living in Connecticut and Oklahoma for the previous ten years. Bob immediately got in contact with Dave. The memories of earlier days were still alive and well when Bob and Phyllenore reunited with Dave and met Nancy. There was much to catch up on.

In 1985 when the Howards left New Mexico for Connecticut Robert E. "Bob" Howard, M.D., Ph.D., had just resigned from his position as tenured Associate Professor at the University of New Mexico Medical School and Associate Director of the UNM Medical Center laboratories. Phyllenore D. Howard, Ph. D., M.B.A., was leaving her position as Associate Director of the then New Mexico Medical Reference Laboratories to accept a position as Vice President of Operations and Laboratory Director with a company developing cancer diagnostic technology. During the period away from the state Bob established a successful medical

consulting business. In 1995 they returned to a new home being built for them in Eldorado at Santa Fe.³⁵

Both Bob and Phyllenore had remained active with the Sierra Club over the years. In 1983 Bob was appointed and later reelected to the Sierra Club national Board of Directors, serving as Vice President for four years and Treasurer for two years until 1990. He also served as the Sierra Club's national Vice President for Planning for ten years. Bob had also been a board member of the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee before leaving for Connecticut.

The New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee (WSC)

The New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee stands tall and casts a long shadow in the history of New Mexico wilderness conservation. It is the direct ancestor of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. The WSC was formed in 1970 by a collection of outdoor organizations to serve as the coordinator of a growing coalition of wildland and wildlife conservation organizations in 1970. Prominent among them were the New Mexico Mountain Club, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Albuquerque and New Mexico Wildlife and Conservation Associations (later renamed the Albuquerque and New Mexico Wildlife Federations), the New Mexico Speleological Society and its Albuquerque Grotto, and the Save the Grand Canyon Committee.³⁶ It sought to influence the creation and management of wilderness areas by exploiting citizen opportunities defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The WSC represented the interests of its member organization by acting as organizer, coordinator, spokesman, and statewide leader for wilderness preservation campaigns. Member organizations were independent and equal partners, a source of WSC leaders, contributors of manpower, providers of special services and talent, and a source of funding. By the mid-1970's the WSC claimed to represent over 30 New Mexico conservation organizations with a combined membership 10,000 citizens.³⁷ Personal memberships were also allowed and by 1975 WSC mailings were going out to 1600 addresses.³⁸ The working core of the organization was always a relatively small number of people who shared the day-to-day duties and carried out the functions necessary to support its citizen campaigns and interactions with other organizations and the Congressional delegation.

The Wilderness Study Committee was born from an event in 1968. In January three New Mexico Mountain Club members, Milo Conrad, Jack Kutz, and George Hankins, representing individuals from a collection of local outdoor recreation and conservation organizations, met with George Proctor, supervisor of the Cibola National Forest. Their purpose was to recommend that the Forest Service add to its list of wilderness candidates two in the Sandia Mountains bordering Albuquerque. Proctor's response was a polite rejection and that answer, when communicated the next night in a meeting with those they were representing resulted in a group decision to explore ways to advocate for wilderness, not just in the Sandias Mountains, but statewide.³⁹ Over the next two years through the efforts of a few led by Milo Conrad, Corry McDonald, and Bob Watt the conservation and outdoor recreation organizations of the state came together to create the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee in 1970. Its immediate goals were inspired by the opportunities presented by the Wilderness Act and were logical responses to its directives. The Act had assigned sole responsibility for the designation of wilderness areas to the Congress and opened the door for citizen participation in their creation and future management. The national conservation organizations, especially The Wilderness

Society, had made a conscious decision to help grassroots organizations take advantage of these opportunities and it had dedicated staffing and training programs to carry out that task. The New Mexico Mountain Club's wilderness coordinator, Milo Conrad, was an early recipient of this training and put it to immediate use by founding the Wilderness Study Committee and serving for over a decade in leadership capacities.⁴⁰

The Wilderness Study Committee was a broad coalition of the state's outdoor recreation, wildlife, hunting and fishing, caving, river-running, and conservation organizations. As it matured it created a model for efficiently organizing citizen efforts and conducting effective wilderness campaigns. As mentioned earlier, Dave Foreman joined the WSC in 1972 and quickly rose to become one of its most influential leaders. In 1973 The Wilderness Society took notice of Foreman and offered him the position of Southwest Representative. In 1975 he became the chairman of the WSC board and served in that capacity until December 1977 when The Wilderness Society called him to Washington to become its grassroots liaison with Society Congressional lobbyists.⁴¹

The Wilderness Study Committee initiated the first comprehensive citizen-led wilderness inventories in New Mexico. It began with inventories of the national forests in the early 1970's, and then turned to preliminary evaluations of BLM-managed public lands in 1975 before making them a top priority for formal evaluation in 1982. It began and functioned through the 1970's as a high-performing and exceedingly active organization, meeting regularly, publishing an excellent newsletter, and holding annual symposiums on wilderness advocacy. It also set up and held special training workshops on the skills necessary for wilderness inventories, citizen organizing, lobbying the Congressional delegation. During this period it kept up regular contact with the state's Congressional delegation, federal land management agencies, and state government. Leading members, particularly Corry McDonald, an effective and early board chair, were noted for their personal relationships with senators and representatives. McDonald frequently wrote bills himself that spelled out the details of wilderness legislation the WSC was seeking. These drafts would be shopped around the delegation looking for a sponsor if no member was already taking the initiative to produce a bill on his own. McDonald could be authoritarian in style and that annoyed some people. Dave Foreman was one.⁴² McDonald had a strong attachment to the national forests, and a much weaker attachment to the arid plains and mountains of the south. When the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed several wilderness areas on the Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge south of Socorro McDonald dismissed them. He questioned the wilderness characteristics of a desert landscape within sight and sound of roads and railroads.⁴³

The 1970's were a time when conservation and environmental protection were popular and bipartisan cooperation on national wilderness legislation was not unusual. The state's delegation was approachable and willing to listen to wilderness proposals and judge them fairly on their merits, in keeping with the views of their constituents and their own personal values and priorities. Ranching, farming, mining, and the petroleum industries dominated the politics in the southern half of the state and representatives from the southern district were typically Republican, locally popular, and often opposed to wilderness but without adding the vitriol that is heard today. Republican representatives from the more urban and Hispanic northern districts could be quite amenable to wilderness legislation. Representative Manuel Lujan, a Republican

representing Albuquerque and surrounding areas, was such a man. He could disappoint wilderness activists, but his basic integrity and clearly stated values made his choices understandable and often predictable.⁴⁴

Representative Lujan was the original sponsor of the New Mexico Omnibus Wilderness Act of 1980. The Act, signed by President Carter, was the great achievement of the Wilderness Study Committee. It created eight new wilderness areas containing 382,500 acres and added another 222,560 acres of wildland to existing wilderness areas. The Act also created the Chaco Culture National Historic Park, the Salinas National Monument, and added five new wilderness study areas to the Forest Service's list.⁴⁵ As of this writing it remains the largest single addition of wilderness within the state since the Wilderness Act of 1964. As welcome as it was, the Omnibus Wilderness Act created less than two-thirds of the land area the WSC was seeking for the same wilderness areas. Domenici's influence had reduced the sizes and numbers of wilderness areas in the final bill and added the poison pill of "releases," land released from being considered as having future potential as wilderness areas and managed as such. Particularly concerning was the release of beautiful and dramatic wilderness-worthy land with caves needing protection along the Guadalupe Escarpment north of Carlsbad Cavern National Park.⁴⁶

During the more favorable environment of its first decade the WSC led a citizen effort that helped produce 783,682 acres of "big W" wilderness. During the next seven years the WSC and its BLM Wilderness Coalition arm were responsible for another 126,050 acres. After 1987 the well went dry. Republican senators and representatives willing to sponsor or vote for wilderness legislation were getting harder to find in New Mexico and elsewhere. Senator Pete Domenici became more critical of the value wilderness when weighed against other uses. His interests in all forms of energy production, his focus on the national budget and abhorrence of deficits, the lucrative economic value of natural resource extraction and commercial development darkened his appraisals of the worth of wilderness. By 2006 environmentalists in his own party gave him the worst lifetime score of any senator for his voting record on environmental issues.⁴⁷ By the mid 90's when Foreman and friends returned to the state Domenici was a powerful senator who defended its military bases, its national laboratories, and its economic engines of agriculture and resource extraction. These positions related to employment, perceived risks to grazing on public lands, and the state's economy and much appreciated. Add to that his intelligence and general likeability and he remained popular and well respected statewide until his retirement in 2008.

The New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition (BLMWC)

The Wilderness Act of 1964 originally applied to all federal agencies managing the public domain other than the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM manages a category of the public domain termed "public land" and it was exempt from the act. The national forests, refuges, grasslands, parks, monuments, and historical sites fell under the umbrella of the Wilderness Act requiring the U. S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the National Park Service to comply. In 1976 passage of the Federal Lands Policy and Management Act brought the BLM and its public lands under the terms of the Wilderness Act.⁴⁸

Public lands harbor some of the most lovely, dramatic, and iconic landscapes in America and some of our largest cohesive wildlands and wilderness. Public lands can be vast, and in New Mexico are greater in area than the National Forests. BLM-administered lands in the state

comprise 13.1 million acres, as compared with 9.1 million acres in the national forests. Of the other agencies, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manages about 400,000 acres residing in nine refuges while the National Park Service administers less than 300,000 acres. The BLM is the land baron and also oversees the most acreage of grassland fit for grazing.

The Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) reorganized the BLM, expanded its mandate give more attention to the long-term health of its lands, and directed it to inventory and evaluate its wildlands and make wilderness area recommendations to the Congress by 1992. The Wilderness Study Committee had already anticipated the passage of FLPMA and begun their scoping study of BLM wildlands in 1975. With the passage of FLPMA the Wilderness Study Committee was back in the business of detailed, comprehensive, and defensible statewide wildland inventories again. The BLM released its initial inventory plans in early 1979 listing 104 units comprising 2,241,769 acres that would be screened for wilderness characteristics. The New Mexico State Office announced a generous number of public meetings that it would hold around the state to explain its endeavor. It's announcement added that it would accept written comments until June 30, 1980 and that it would make its final decision on what units would be permanently removed from further consideration as wilderness in September. This put enormous pressure on conservation organizations to verify that the BLM had a process that was fair and consistent, and that nothing wilderness-worthy was dropped from further consideration.⁴⁹

When September rolled around it was clear that what qualified for wilderness in BLM eyes was much too restrictive compared with the definition conservationists found in their reading of the Wilderness Act. The BLM had decided that out of the 2,213,000 acres of land initially considered worthy of consideration, only 885,000 acres were to be scrutinized for potential recommendation to Congress as wilderness candidates.⁵⁰ The front page headline of the Wilderness Study Committee May 1980 newsletter was "Write BLM NOW!" Harold Walling was the new board chair and Judy Bishop his vice chair. Judy's views did not appear in the newsletter but Walling's hair was on fire. His WSC had already identified 100 potential BLM WSA's and decided that 59 of those containing 1,346,588 acres were worthy of a detailed survey to fix their boundaries and confirm that required wilderness characteristics were present. "Las Cruces District is a disaster!" Walling declared, going on to notify the membership that there would soon be a special follow-up alert.⁵¹

Walling had good reason for concern. Despite objections and comments from WSC and its coalition members, BLM's subsequent reassessments and adjusted proposals only got worse. In 1991 its final decision and recommendation transmitted by the president to Congress the BLM had whittled down its recommended package to 22 new wilderness areas containing 487,186 acres and releasing an additional 420,400 acres from future consideration for wilderness designation.⁵² Not knowing, in 1980, that this was the future the WSC did the only thing it could do: Push ahead, develop the best case for wilderness additions that was possible, and then look for willing sponsors of the wilderness legislation they sought. That was the avenue that the Wilderness Act had created for the public and the WSC had already proved that it worked.

In early 1982 the Wilderness Study Committee and a portion of its coalition decided to make the fight to preserve BLM wilderness-worthy lands a special priority. Early in the year they

agreed to create the New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition, a special arm of the WSC, to carry out a program of wilderness inventories and produce a document that could challenge the BLM proposals. New Mexico was divided into five areas, each staffed by one to three coalition members trained in inventory work, and charged with assembling teams to conduct detailed wilderness inventories and maps of all WSC-identified candidates. Judy Bishop was named the new coalition's statewide coordinator. Principal organizations supporting the coalition were, in addition to the WSC, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, The Wilderness Society, and the Gila Wilderness Committee.⁵³ For the next five years this small team, supplemented by field volunteers, threw themselves, heart and soul, into this task. The high level of their work resulted in a product that became a standard for detail, thoroughness, and availability. Beginning in 1982 the BLM Wilderness Coalition became the prominent statewide representative speaking for conservation organizations in meetings and hearings with the BLM, Congress, and other stakeholders.

The final report of the BLM Wilderness Coalition wilderness inventory was published in book form and titled *Wildlands: New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition Statewide Proposal*.⁵⁴ *Wildlands* proposed 55 wilderness areas spread throughout the state embracing 1,879,289 acres. Jim Fish was the compiler of *Wildlands* data and its editor. He prepared the final manuscript using his personal computer and his own darkroom to convert the 35 mm photographic slides taken by inventory teams to the black and white prints appearing in the published copy.⁵⁵ During the last few years of the BLM Wilderness Coalition he and Judy Bishop were a team and the principal representatives of the BLMWC at hearings and meetings and all the while providing endless pages of written comments to the BLM. The 1988 BLM proposal released a year after *Wildlands* contained 27 candidates with 545,072 acres. The final recommendation in 1991 was, as mentioned above, a paltry 22 Wilderness Study Areas containing 487,186 acres.

After releasing its 1988 proposal the BLM convened a stakeholders meeting that included conservation organizations, representatives of oil and gas companies, the ranching and farming community, and others. Jim Fish remembered it as a two day meeting and during that time the audience considered every one of the BLM's 22 WSA candidates. A sincere attempt was made by the BLM leaders to reach a consensus among the participants regarding boundaries, fences and fence lines, salt and watering facilities needing rancher access, roads, ways, gates, and the like. Objections and requests for changes were solicited by the BLM. Changes were made, and agreements reached including boundary adjustments, to the satisfaction of all parties. Special attention was given to rancher requests. At the end of the negotiations the BLM checked with the audience and no one indicated dissatisfaction with the results. With that the New Mexico State Director observed that with the changes made and the consensus reached that all the WSA's were acceptable to everyone. Fish said that the representative from the Cattle Growers Association of New Mexico then startled everyone by saying "We are totally opposed to wilderness and always will be." With that he and the ranchers present got up and walked out of the room.⁵⁶

Jim Fish was already against allowing livestock to graze on wilderness areas before the aforementioned meeting, privately declaring "Wilderness with livestock on it is not wilderness." He had participated in the meeting in good faith and assumed everyone else would also. Fish had grown up on a 10,000 acre ranch in southwest Texas and knew the hardships and rewards of

ranching; however, the attitude and duplicity of the ranchers so disgusted him that afterward he decided to "declare war" on public land grazing. He resigned from his position with the BLM Wilderness Coalition and subsequently formed the Public Land Action Network (PLAN). The objective of PLAN was to expose the problems livestock create for public lands and wilderness in particular. PLAN would seek removal of livestock from the entire public domain.

Over the next few years PLAN grew to about 2000 members from all across the United States. Fish was a regular attendee and participant in grazing policy hearings by the agencies and Congress. He sought an amendment to the Wilderness Act that would remove livestock from wilderness, but he could never gain the support of the large national conservation organizations necessary to mount an effective campaign. They replied to him that it was more important to devote effort to adding wilderness and defer concerns over grazing until some time in the future. Fish finally gave up and closed PLAN in 1995, but he never lost his disgust with ranchers and they never forgot his war.⁵⁷

The New Mexico Wilderness Coalition

Jim Fish characterized the BLM Wilderness Coalition as always being a small organization of only 10-15 members with a single purpose: Perform the inventories and work necessary to produce *Wildlands*. Fish said that shortly after *Wildlands* was published the BLMWC dissolved, probably in 1988. That would have been in keeping with its charter from the WSC and the coalition of conservation organizations it represented. Fish and Judy Bishop continued to attend hearings and meetings as representatives of the BLMWC and respond to BLM and congressional requests for comments regarding wilderness proposals, agency decisions, and management actions for several more years representing and defending the positions taken in *Wildlands*.

According to Fish the BLM Wilderness Coalition dissolved, probably in 1988. Shortly thereafter an organization called the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition (WC) was formed that may have been formed by or from BLMWC members.⁵⁸ There may have been a desire by BLMWC members to keep southern New Mexico activists involved in wilderness advocacy as the Wilderness Study Committee was drifting towards a more Albuquerque-Santa Fe-centered and northern New Mexico-focused organization. Whatever the reason or the process, the new Wilderness Coalition chose the perfect leader to get things started.

In 1989 Maynard H. "Dutch" Salmon became the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition's state coordinator and held that position until 1995. Salmon was an avid outdoorsman, hunter, and fisherman from Silver City. He was a regionally popular story-teller and writer of books and magazine articles. He had established High Lonesome Books publishing for the purpose of catering to regional and borderland authors who found it difficult to get published by the larger establishments. He also was the founder and a long-serving Chairman of the Gila Conservation Coalition dedicated to the protection of the wild Gila River and its headwaters in the Gila Wilderness Area. His books and periodical submissions were filled with his experiences and insights gained from hunting, fishing, backpacking, and river running in the Gila region. He received a number of awards for his writing and for his conservation work over his lifetime, remaining active in conservation and writing until his death in 2019.⁵⁹

The New Mexico Wilderness Coalition claimed many of the same organizations as members that already belonged to the fading New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee. The press often confused it with the Wilderness Study Committee and the BLM Wilderness Coalition as well as, it seems, did some of its own members. It remained a small organization over its short lifespan under Salmon, rarely appearing in the archives of the state's newspapers. It took much the same positions on issues that the Wilderness Study Committee took and the BLM Wilderness Coalition had taken. It appears that it never incorporated or registered with the state.

In spite of Salmon's local prestige and influence, the WC was never large enough or active enough to be a force for wilderness legislation or changes in wilderness management. While it claimed to speak for a number of conservation organizations, the stronger voices were the recognizable member organizations of its coalition, such as the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club and the New Mexico Wildlife Federation. It did, however, add another voice to the Gila Conservation Coalition's crusade to protect the Gila River from dams, diversions, and water extraction schemes.

During this period the most active conservation issues found in newsprint were related to wildlife and hunting, the Gila River, or the never-ending discussion of grazing vs. overgrazing, grazing fees, the plight of ranchers vs. the threat livestock pose to public lands and wildlife, and the fate of the privately owned Valles Caldera. Congress and the state's Congressional delegation was, with the exception of Senator Bingaman, resistant to wilderness legislation so there was little progress nationwide to introduce or act upon it. One might have expected that the completion of the BLM wilderness inventory and presentation of candidates to Congress would have prompted legislation from New Mexico, but none was forthcoming.

In spite of its low profile, the Wilderness Coalition gave a home to wilderness stalwarts living in southern New Mexico and kept them in communication. Bob Tafanelli, Tom Wootten, and Greg Magee, a biologist, a horticulturist-naturalist, and a horticulturist/ landscape architect/naturalist, all with intimate knowledge of southern New Mexico wildlands were active in the Wilderness Coalition serving at various times on its board. All three later became founders and board members of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance.

In 1995 Dutch Salmon stepped down as state coordinator of New Mexico Wilderness Coalition and it merged with the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, at that time led by John Wright. A five member board was formed with Wright as its chair. This was the organization that Foreman and friends encountered when they again took up residence in New Mexico. The newly merged organizations could be schizophrenic about its name and the initialisms of the merged configuration. The press was confused by it. It was listed as the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition/Wilderness Study Committee (NMWC/WSC) in the flyers for the 1995 Wilderness Conference sponsored by the Wildlands Project. Former members I have talked with tend to refer to it according to their affiliation prior to the merger. Today the short-lived merger is mostly forgotten.⁶⁰

Seeking Change: The 1995 New Mexico Wildlands Conference

Early in 1995 Dave asked Susan Morgan to put together a statewide New Mexico wildlands conference. The stated purpose was to bring known wilderness leaders together to begin considering strategies to help revive wilderness activism and promote legislative success. The College of Santa Fe was selected as the venue. Attendance to the conference was by invitation only. Susan had previous experience organizing events and eagerly set about building an organizing committee. An early invitation to help prepare for the conference was extended to the NMWC/WSC. It was rejected and John Wright, the chair, voiced the opinion that hosting conferences was more properly the purview of the NMWC/WSC. The invitation to participate in conference was left open, however, and NMWC/WSC was listed as a cooperating organization in the formal conference agenda. Members Wright and John Simpson represented the organization and helped facilitate strategy sessions. Susan also remembered that among her organizing committee was "a beautiful young couple with long hair" recently arrived from Missouri -- Martin and Julie Heinrich.⁶¹

The 1995 New Mexico Wildlands Conference was a landmark event held at the College of Santa Fe over the weekend of September 22-24 and attracting over 100 attendees. Representatives from a broad array of organizations were present, including some promoting animal welfare. The conference brought together old conservation friends and acquaintances with long-standing ties from across the southwest. Morgan called it her favorite conference of the many she had been involved with because of the friendly and relaxed atmosphere accompanied by feelings of reunion and renewal. The conference was divided into two parts, the first being a presentation and discussion of issues needing attention, the second an exploration of strategies that could be used to attack those issues. The issues were titled:⁶²

- Mexican Wolf
- BLM Wilderness and Public Lands Giveaway
- Logging Without Laws
- Endangered Species
- Grazing

The principal speakers during the course of the conference were:

- Susan Morgan/Dave Foreman: *Opening Remarks and Welcome*
- Ron Mondt: *How the Wildlands Project is Organized*
- Jim Strittholt: *What is Conservation Biology*
- Jim Baca: *The Threat to Our Public Lands*
- Lawson LeGate: *What Worked in Utah*
- Brant Calkin: *SUWA ROADSHOW*⁶³
- Dave Foreman: *Building a New Mexico Wilderness Network/Around the Campfire*

A highlight of the conference was the presentation by Wendy Brown of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service program for reintroducing the Mexican Grey Wolf in New Mexico and Arizona.⁶⁴ The USFWS process required local hearings to inform the public of its plans and obtain public comments before approving and conducting actual reintroductions. Later, in closing remarks to the audience, Foreman made a diplomatic appeal for a coalition of wildlife supporters across the spectrum of organizations present to attend the wolf reintroduction

hearings. Conference organizers used this opportunity to hold a gathering immediately after the close of the conference to discuss how to organize and take advantage of the hearings. During the meeting Nancy Morton was central to assembling a plan to flood the hearings with conservation organization members and concerned citizens.⁶⁵

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife wolf reintroduction hearings in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona were dominated by wolf supporters. The attendees to the Wildland Conference had a heavy hand in that. Foreman personally arranged to bus people from the Albuquerque area to the Roswell hearing and commended Wes Leonard for "an outstanding job" of mobilizing local Sierra Club members and the public for the El Paso hearing. All the hearings in New Mexico, Texas, and Arizona had audiences filled with wolf reintroduction supporters and individual comments made by citizens at the microphone were heavily in favor of reintroduction.⁶⁶

Brant Calkin's presence and presentation to the audience at the conference had special significance. Calkin was a biologist, a long-time environmental activist, and conservation leader with deep roots in New Mexico and a long association with the Sierra Club. He and Susan Tixier (pronounced tuh-shay) had been hired in 1987 to become co-directors of the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. Both had been prominent in New Mexico prior to 1987 when SUWA recruited them to help it revive and rebuild. Both worked as a team for poverty-level pay. Calkin, like Foreman, had been a home-grown wilderness activist since the mid 1960's and held a number of positions in the Sierra Club and state government. As executive director, Calkin became the selfless point of SUWA's spear, planning and setting goals, managing the organization, and leading its conservation campaigns.⁶⁷

Tixier was born and raised in Aspen, Colorado and had been legal council for the executive committee of the national Sierra Club. When SUWA found her she was on special assignment to assist conservation organizations in New Mexico.⁶⁸ She had wasted no time in New Mexico. She was a co-founder of the New Mexico Environmental Law Center and Forest Guardians. Once in Utah, over 50 herself, she decided to found the Great Old Broads for Wilderness after she heard Senator Orin Hatch (Republican from Utah) oppose wilderness designation because it prohibited the use of motorized vehicles thereby discriminating against the elderly. She found Hatch's statement an insult to the elderly.⁶⁹ Tixier became the SUWA legal counsel, public explainer, and bridge builder. Susan could appear anywhere in Utah, seemingly at any time, giving presentations and holding forums, panel discussions, debates, and outdoor events for citizens, local officials and their communities.⁷⁰

When Calkin arrived at the Wildlands Conference he had been an activist with a 30-year association with the Sierra Club. He was named a national board member and then president of the Sierra Club in the mid-1970's. In 1984 the Sierra Club bestowed on him its highest honor, the John Muir Award. Calkin had served New Mexico state government as both volunteer and an appointee to conservation commissions and the land office.⁷¹ He was a backpacker, a hunter, an outdoorsman, and a private pilot and had no problem disappearing for weeks in the outback of the Grand Canyon, Mexico, or somewhere in a kayak. Now he was entering his sixties as one of New Mexico's and Utah's most prominent and successful conservation leaders. He had retired from his executive post with SUWA early in 1995 and now as regular staff member was singing his swan song in a yearlong performance of what was titled the SUWA Roadshow.

Calkin came to the Santa Fe in the midst of his whirlwind journey across America presenting slide shows displaying beauty and wonders of Utah's red rock wilderness and warning of the threat to it posed by the Utah delegation's so-called wilderness bill, H.R. 1745. The bill would create a paltry amount of wilderness while permanently opening all the remaining undesignated wildland in Utah for resource extraction and development. By September Calkin was well into the total of 120 cities in 24 states he would visit before year's end raising opposition to H.R.1745. To save SUWA money on travel he was living out of a well-worn VW van. In recent months SUWA's campaign against H.R. 1745 had stimulated widespread public opposition among those who heard about the legislation. Senators and representatives were receiving thousands of angry letters and hundreds of Washington office visits from constituents living in states across the nation, all protesting H.R. 1745. Not yet foreseen at the September Wildlands Conference was the outcome of Calkin's news-making journey and SUWA's outstanding national campaign. On December 14 Utah Representative Hansen, on the floor of the House, would, at the last minute, yank his bill that he had successfully moved through committees and scheduled for consideration and a vote. The surprise in the chamber and gallery was palpable and Speaker Newt Gingrich was reportedly angered by this waste of valuable yearend time. The reason for Hansen's unusual action was a last minute vote count that revealed too many Republicans, responding to constituents, had decided to break with party loyalty and professional courtesy and vote against the Utah delegation's bill.⁷² Merry Christmas, Utah!

By simply attending the Wilderness Conference Calkin presented a challenge to New Mexico conservation organizations to step up their game. There were no secrets hidden in his program for SUWA. Calkin had announced three goals for SUWA when he took the position of executive director: 1) build the membership; 2) nationalize the Utah wilderness issue; 3) defend the wildlands until they gained wilderness protection.⁷³ It was hard work requiring dedication and personal sacrifice, but Calkin, Tixier, the staff of SUWA, and its volunteer members would be partially rewarded with the 1996 declaration of the giant Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. In the meantime they succeeded in their endeavor to protect the undesignated wilderness they sought and educated a staff and a constituency that has lasted. Utah had to wait until 2006 to get another wilderness area, but in 2009 President Obama signed legislation that created fifteen new Utah wilderness areas. Their legacy lives and the fight goes on.

The Decision to Form the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

The Wildlands Conference and the wolf reintroduction hearings that followed would have reminded attendees of the value of strong coalition building and active public engagement on wilderness issues....and the rewards. "Old-timers" from the early days of the Wilderness Study Committee would have recalled their successes of the 1970's and '80's. SUWA's revival and the example it was setting was in the regional news, readily available for anyone willing to notice and analyze. The conference must have instilled hope that a similar revival could happen in New Mexico. That had been Foreman's motivation and was behind the decisions to make the conference a strategy-building gathering and restricting attendance to those known to be leaders and activists, past or present. It's theme was a clear statement to attendees that it was time to get off the couch and become once more active defending the land and its wildlife. Attendees may have left wondering, "who is going to lead it?" As time progressed it became evident that,

in spite of its best intentions, it wasn't going to be the merged New Mexico Wilderness Coalition/Wilderness Study Committee.⁷⁴

Both Dave and Nancy and Bob and Phillenore had observed that the WC/WSC was not focused on a manageable set of issues, "it seemed to be going off in all directions." The four had begun regularly attending board and membership meetings, at times joined by others in their circle of friends and contacts. There was little interest in suggestions raised by this group intended to increase member participation, focus efforts, and further activate the wilderness program. Suggestions to increase the size of the board to help lead a reactivation were dismissed. Nancy Morton's request that the number of membership meetings per year be raised from one to four to stimulate participation met a lukewarm response. Perhaps to placate her and others, a change to three membership meetings per year was adopted; but then, after a few meetings, John Wright called her to say that people were complaining about too many meetings.⁷⁵ No one was igniting the grassroots, no one was providing enthusiasm. The successful response to the wolf reintroduction hearings was being ignored. The success of a reborn SUWA was going unnoticed.

It seems inexplicable that the WC/WSC took so little advantage of the wealth of talent and experience it was being offered. Foreman and friends were not outsiders. A number were former members and leaders of the organization when it was most successful. All were willing workers. All were conservation activists. Several were recognizable public figures that knew how successful campaigns for citizen support were built and run. Several were state and/or regional or national figures. This group included, in addition to Dave, Nancy, Bob and Phillenore: Jim Baca, former state land commissioner, former national head of the Bureau of Land Management, soon to become mayor of Albuquerque; Bob Langsencamp, former chair of the Wilderness Study Committee, former deputy state land commissioner, member of Governor Apodaca's Wilderness Commission; Kathy Love, a UNM law school student studying to become an environmental lawyer; Jack Humphrey, executive director of the Sky Island Alliance, former canvas director for Citizens for a Better Environment, former field manager for Greenpeace; Rick Aster, Professor of geophysics, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, intimately familiar with BLM lands in southern New Mexico; Todd Schulke, environmental studies biologist, later member of several state government forest health committees, cofounder of the Center for Biological Diversity, later to become a two decade board member and officer of the Wilderness Alliance; and Martin Heinrich, executive director of the Cottonwood Gulch Foundation (providing environmental education for young people), later to become Wilderness Alliance board member, second board chair, Albuquerque city councilman, New Mexico District 1 Representative to Congress, New Mexico U.S. Senator. As Foreman, Morton, and the Howards have said, "We were organizers,we just knew how to get things done."

Dave Foreman recalled a conversation with Susan Morgan during this period in which she floated the idea of creating a new, formal, non-profit organization, with a full-time paid staff, able to accept large donations, and solicit grants from individuals, other non-profits, foundations, and government agencies. She was describing an organization like the Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance under Brant Calkin and similar conservation organizations operating across the country. Both were familiar with this category. Such a step would require the startup to seek

New Mexico incorporation and 501(c)(3) non-profit status granted by the IRS.⁷⁶ All straightforward tasks, but time consuming. Susan's proposal probably made Dave uneasy for a time. His preferences were for lean, hungry, and focused grassroots clubs composed of volunteers as exemplified by the early versions of the Wilderness Study Committee and Earth First!.⁷⁷ It was his belief that these groups produced the most inspired, daring, committed, and effective wilderness activists. Regardless, he realized the times were changing (his words), and seeing the value of Susan's proposal he bought in.

Susan's proposition was shared with others within the Foreman circle of friends and contacts and found appealing. Thought was given to the idea that the WC/WSC could simply be converted to such a non-profit, but then a problem was identified. The Wilderness Study Committee had registered with the state in 1976 as a non-taxable educational corporation but not with the IRS. No problem there. The Wilderness Coalition was an informal (unregistered) organization without a clear financial history. The mingling of its funds with WSC made the status of the merged organization's balance sheet uncertain. This could be a problem if the books of a new formal organization based on the WC/WSC were to be audited by a potential donor or the IRS and found lacking. A new wilderness organization, separate from the WC/WSC, one starting with a clean balance sheet, was necessary.⁷⁸

Executing the Decision

By this time it was early 1997. Foreman and his circle of friends and associates had met several times and agreed that the idea of starting a formal non-profit with a paid staff should be pursued with the members of the WC/WSC. It was agreed that they would present the idea at the upcoming membership meeting. While participants state that there was no formal planning for the meeting, there was probably an agreement that they should attend as a group and possibly who would speak. The goal was to convince the membership to dissolve the WC/WSC and reorganize with a much larger and diverse board as a formal non-profit. If the membership of the WC/WSC could be persuaded to make the change, then the new Wilderness Alliance would inherit a well-known and highly knowledgeable core of members representing all regions within the state, especially the southern half. If the idea was rejected, then the Foreman group planned to separate from the WC/WSC and build a new, formal non-profit from the ground up. As they said, "we just knew how to get things done."⁷⁹

The first WC/WSC membership meeting of 1997 was held, probably in March, on the campus of New Mexico Tech in Socorro. Most if not all of those mentioned in the group attended. Their presence swelled the audience in the small room to twenty five to thirty.⁸⁰ Toward the end of the meeting, when regular business had been concluded, Dave Foreman rose to present his group's idea of dissolving the WSC and creating a new, formal 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation led by a fifteen-member board and a paid staff. Bob Tapanelli remembers Dave as a charismatic and spell-binding speaker, "an old time Bible-thumping preacher."⁸¹ His presentation was an overview of what was needed and what was possible with an organizational change. Dave was followed by Bob Howard who methodically furnished the details of how such a transformation could be accomplished. Last to speak was Martin Heinrich who gave a summation that Tapanelli simply described as "Martin, convincing in his own way."⁸²

The unsuspecting audience was overwhelmed. Initial reactions ranged from surprise and dismay, perhaps shock, to interest and enthusiasm. It was soon obvious that the advocates for change were more than just these three speakers, but included a contingent who had traveled down from Albuquerque and points north. This raised questions about the motives of this group and its commitment to a statewide wilderness program. The doubters foresaw future favoritism accorded the more well-watered, more forested mountains of the northern half of the state where wildlands were mostly managed by the Forest Service. This would put the southern half of the state, much of it lying in the Chihuahu Desert and home to wildlands managed by the BLM, at risk of being disadvantaged if not outright ignored. There was a history supporting this concern as some leaders of the early Wilderness Study Committee had little interest in the arid wildlands of southern New Mexico and exhibited that prejudice. Foreman responded by reminding them that he had resided in Glenwood in the southern portion of the state for six years when employed by The Wilderness Society and was simultaneously a leader of the WSC. He had coordinated the first inventories of BLM wildlands in the mid-1970's. He may have reminded them that he was also the joint author of *The Big Outside* and had identified the dry, volcanic West Potrillo Mountains near Las Cruces as a prime target for a massive wilderness area.⁸³ It was pointed out that others present, namely Rick Aster, and Bob Langsencamp, were both well-known and well-traveled southern New Mexico conservationists.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Jim Baca had been state land commissioner and head of the national BLM. He was certainly attuned to the wilderness value of southern New Mexico's public lands and unlikely lend his name to a movement that ignored the part of the state containing the majority of BLM-managed lands.

Wesley Leonard, the respected leader of the El Paso Group of the Sierra Club, was a friend of Dave's, a former Earth Firster, and a great proponent of Chihuahu Desert wilderness. He was in favor of the proposal.⁸⁵ Wilderness Coalition board member Greg Magee was enthused by the idea and similarly committed to the desert wild.⁸⁶ Former Wilderness Coalition board member Bob Tafanelli was uneasy about the change but willing to vote for it. After a while it could be sensed that the audience was beginning to accept the idea of a new, activist replacement for the WC/WSC. A motion was made to create a new formal organization named the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance with a fifteen-member board replacing the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition/Wilderness Study Committee. The New Mexico Wilderness Coalition would separate and be registered with the state as non-profit operating as a coalition of independent conservation organizations much as before.

The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of creating the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. Dave and Nancy agreed that all but two present voted to create a new, formal, non-profit organization. Others say more may have voted against the proposition, and some reluctantly voted for the proposition. All agree that at least John Wright, the chairman of the WC/WSC, was opposed as well as one other member of the audience and possibly one or two board members. After voting the attendees were invited to walk over to Rick Aster's house following the close of the membership meeting to begin planning the transition. About a dozen gathered in Rick' living room where Bob Howard was unofficially elected as chair of the new board, some board members were chosen, and next steps were laid out.⁸⁷

Building the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

Shortly after the meeting Howard mailed the announcement of the change of the WSC/WA to the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and announcing a meeting at Dave and Nancy's home in Albuquerque to formally elect board members and officers. He invited members of the previous board to join the new board and John Wright was invited to remain on as board chair. Greg Magee accepted the offer to join the new board, but Wright and other board members rejected it and membership in the Wilderness Alliance. The meeting was held and the full slate of fifteen board members was formally selected, officers were named, and assignments for the tasks needing to be done were accepted. Bob Howard was formally elected board chair, Jeff Regenold as vice-chair, Nancy Morton as secretary, and Rick Aster was named treasurer. Kathy Love and Nancy Morton became the subcommittee working with Bob Howard to draft the bylaws and submit the application for incorporation. Bob dealt with fundraising, organizational details, agendas, meetings, public relations, and planning; Phillenore served as bookkeeper, accountant, newsletter writer and editor, and handled membership recruiting, recording, and communications including producing a regular newsletter. Bob also handled the daily routine, and the task of incorporating the Wilderness Coalition as a revamped organization of organizations and filling the new board. Phillenore handled the Wilderness Alliance application for IRS 501(c)(3) approval as a formal non-profit. The extent of their contribution was summarized by Wesley Leonard, a founder, "Bob and Phillenore were the Wilderness Alliance for the first two years."⁸⁸ Perhaps an exaggeration, but they were certainly the public face of it.

Raising the funds necessary to get the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance off the ground was one of the first objectives. Bob had a list of about 40 potential members but much more than membership contributions were needed. Foreman's connections with Doug Tompkins paid off and his Foundation for Deep Ecology made an early contribution, passing money through the Wildlands Project for a small fee. Brian O'Donnell and Melissa Watson of the Wilderness Support Center in Durango, Colorado were helpful in locating potential donors. The Wilderness Society, the Sierra Club, and the Wilberforce Foundation all provided institutional support. Various individuals also responded. Phillenore recalls that one day "\$2000 dropped through the transom in a letter from Georgia O'Keefe."⁸⁹

Bob Howard's 1997 end-of-year report as board chair states that the first organizational meeting of the Wilderness Alliance was held May 3, 1997. Articles of Incorporation and associated bylaws and standing rules were filed and accepted. The organization had become official. The board was fully filled with fifteen members and four meetings had been held during 1997. Committees were organized for Honchos (task leaders), Membership, Fund Raising, Native American Outreach, Staff Search, Nominations and Elections, Inspectors of Elections, Campouts, and Newsletter. Funds had been received from Director donations, individuals, transfers from the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition, Rockwood Fund, and the Foundation for Deep Ecology. Out of about 150 members about 40 were considered to be activists and about two dozen had been evaluated for areas of expertise. Two newsletters put together by Phillenore had been sent out to a mailing list of 450. Finally, a "terrific campout in the San Mateo Mountains next to the Apache Kid Wilderness" had been held.⁹⁰

The Articles of Incorporation for the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance are stamped "Filed" with the New Mexico Corporation Commission, May 9, 1997," its official birthday.⁹¹ Incorporators were Robert E. Howard of Santa Fe and Nancy A. Morton of Albuquerque. IRS approval for 501(c)(3) tax status took another two years, finally occurring in August 1999.⁹² The founders of the Wilderness Alliance, made up of its original fifteen-member Board of Directors, were:⁹³

Rick Aster (Treasurer)	Socorro
Jim Baca	Albuquerque
Pam Eaton	Denver
Dave Foreman	Albuquerque
Robert E. Howard (Chairperson)	Santa Fe
Jack D. Humphrey	Albuquerque
Bob Langsenkamp	Santa Fe
C. Wesley Leonard	El Paso
Kathleen J. Love	Albuquerque
Greg Magee	Las Cruces
Nancy Morton (Secretary)	Albuquerque
Jeff Regenold (Vice-Chair)	Los Alamos
Joe Rodríguez	El Paso
Bob Tafanelli	Las Cruces
Thomas H. Wootten	Las Cruces

Howard's reports in 1998 indicate that things were moving fast. By June he could report that Todd Schulke had sponsored a successful fundraising event at the Harwood Art Center in Albuquerque in April. Featured were the landscape photography of Michael Berman with a panel discussion featuring Berman, Jim Baca and Dave Foreman as panelists.⁹⁴ The wilderness program had been defined with goals, strategies, and specific objectives. IRS 501(c)(3) certification and related tax-exempt status was still pending. Paid membership was slightly down to 135, but 35 of those were new members. He also reported that the "New Mexico Wilderness Coalition had been reorganized, in concept, as a true coalition of organizations," and that the final draft for the incorporation of the Wilderness Coalition was ready for board approval.⁹⁵

Howard continued to struggle with getting the Wilderness Coalition off on its own, finally achieving that goal on March 23, 2000 when it received its state certificate of incorporation. Richard Aster and Martin Heinrich were registered as incorporators. Jim O'Donnell was the Coalition's first statewide coordinator and the organization began with a number of businesses and conservation groups as members. After a year it changed its public name to the Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness. The Coalition was initially very active with a large number of organizations and businesses. Its leadership initially came from the Wilderness Alliance staff and board, but later went on its own. At its peak it claimed over 300 business and organizations as members. It cooled with time and filed for dissolution in 2006. Much of its role has been assumed by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance which routinely assembles and hosts coalitions made up of conservation organizations and foundations when initiating and conducting its campaigns.

On March 4, 1999 the Wilderness Alliance hired its first staff member, 23-year-old Ed Sullivan, as Program Coordinator. He was soon made the first Executive Director of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. On March 17 Michael Scialdone came to work as Wilderness Inventory Coordinator.⁹⁶ Both men briefly lived with Dave and Nancy as they got settled in to their new jobs and found places of their own. In October Tisha Krouse, soon to become Tisha Broska, was hired as a contractor "to do whatever needs to be done." Today, as Deputy Director working under Mark Allison, Executive Director, she continues to function in much the same manner after over two decades holding many positions, including over a year as acting executive director. Tisha was soon followed by Matt Clark, Jim O'Donnell, and Steve Capra,

That first staff members became the highly effective core of the staff that was built around them. Sullivan, while seemingly young, was an enthusiastic and remarkably capable leader serving the Wilderness Alliance well. He was able grow the membership to several times its original size in the three years he led the organization. Having served on the staff of Tom Udall's successful campaign for the House of Representatives, then later working in Washington D.C. for Congress, Sullivan came to the job with an understanding of the legislative system and the basics of fund raising and organizing. He was very good at both.⁹⁷

Bob Howard, as board chair, had been insistent that the first task of the new staff would be a total re-inventory of all New Mexico wildlands for potential wilderness area additions. Michael Scialdone was hired specifically for this assignment. Scialdone, a geologist, had just finished performing a similar task in southern Utah for SUWA. New Mexico is a big state, though, and Michael needed help. Board member Greg Magee, a horticulturist, landscape architect, and naturalist, was happy to leave the board to become Scialdone's assistant. Michael divided the state into northern and southern halves, taking the north himself and assigning Greg, a Las Cruces resident, the south. The work was a thorough statewide update on the original inventories first done by the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee and its BLM Wilderness Coalition. Michael and Greg trained a cadre of volunteers they recruited and completed the BLM-managed wildlands in the spring of 2002 before turning their attention to the national forests managed by the USFS.⁹⁸ In another year and a half the forest inventory was complete. The results for the state filled two file cabinets with their reports, maps, and findings. This voluminous archive was summarized in a digital document containing photos, text, data, and maps.⁹⁹ It was then distributed via compact disk (CD) internally, to federal agencies, funding sources, politicians and their staff, and to any interested parties. The inventory has since been used as the starting point for a continuous process of review and updating of the state's wilderness archive. It is not unusual for data and information in the Wilderness Alliance files to be more accurate, relevant, and recent for a specific area than that in agency files or those of other organizations.

In April of 2000 Bob Howard was approached by Dave Foreman and Michael Soulé and asked to attend a board meeting of The Wildlands Project. Bob attended and left the meeting a member of the board. At the next board meeting was elected chairperson.¹⁰⁰ 2000 was also the last full year that Bob would serve as chairman of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, having held that post and performed its duties admirably during the four critical years of its earliest history. Those founders and staff I interviewed had the highest regard for Bob, loyally aided by

Phillenore, for what they accomplished. His last Chair's Report of December 2, 2000, noted recent accomplishments but then turned to the future. It is a document that still deserves our attention.

Howard begins by characterizing the organization as having developed from an adolescent to a young adult. For the year it had exceeded its fundraising target by 15%, its membership target by 35%, and it was nearly fully staffed and looking at some good candidates for Wilderness Protection Coordinator. The Wilderness Alliance had a significant presence at the Denver Wilderness 2000 Conference in September. Good connections were being made via political efforts. The Coalition for New Mexico Wilderness (the renamed New Mexico Wilderness Coalition) was going strong. The Wilderness Alliance was getting good press and probably increasing public awareness of and support for wilderness.

Turning his attention to the bigger picture, Howard references the growing specie extinction crisis that scientists are reporting and the findings of conservation biology. Conservation biology (the subject of his new position with the Wildlands Project) offered guidance for the role the Wilderness Alliance must play. In three short paragraphs he provided a primer on the principal concepts: wilderness area size should be maximized; wildlife corridors linking them are needed; buffers around both should be considered. Then he asks and answers his own question: "Where does wilderness fit? Wilderness fits at the very core of wildness, at the crossroads of ecosystem function, and at the center of addressing the extinction crisis."

Looking ahead he summarized his findings and recommendations. First, he reminded the board that America's demographics are changing and distractions are diverting peoples attention away from wilderness and nature. The organization must engage peoples bodies, minds, and spirits with wilderness, because "Without majority popular support for wilderness, we cannot permanently protect wilderness." He allows that full conversion of New Mexico's deserving wildlands to designated wilderness will take a long time, concluding: "We need to rethink our wilderness protection possibilities, and include every kind of wilderness protection action we can think of in our strategy Protection of wilderness, on the ground, should be the focal center of all our strategy and operations. (Emphasis his.)¹⁰¹

Bob Howard's term as chair ended with the board elections in the spring, 2001. At that time he stepped down and was succeeded by Martin Heinrich who served as chair for a year, then was followed by Randy Gray, a conservation biologist employed by the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service. Bob remained actively engaged as board member for six more years, retiring in 2007.

Becoming a Leader in the Wilderness Community

Wilderness area designations came slowly during the first dozen years in the life of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance. It only emphasized the importance of Howard's directive to protect wildlands awaiting designation, and echo of a similar directive from Brant Calkin to SUWA. In keeping with that guidance, the organization had adopted a mission statement emphasizing this goal. Specific staff were then and are now chosen and assigned this responsibility. Staff and volunteers continue to monitor physical changes or environmental insults to the water or the landscape of the state's wildlands. Staff and board always have followed the management plans

and the actions by the U.S. Forest Service, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management. If ill advised actions are a possibility "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

The first wilderness inventories by Michael Scialdone and Greg Magee provided the information needed to select promising campaign candidates. Once a staff and a cadre of volunteers capable handling a campaign were assembled one was selected. The year was 2001 and the ambitious Cabezón Wilderness Campaign was kicked off in August. The volcanic plug, Cabezón Peak, stood tall on the horizon about thirty-five miles northwest of town of Bernalillo. The Wilderness Alliance selected for its first campaign a 210,000 acre collection of wilderness area candidates, the easternmost enclosing Cabezón Peak. The others lay to the west taking in mesas and grasslands, most in Sandoval County, some lapping over into McKinley County. Jim Fish had inventoried this collection of wilderness candidates himself fifteen years earlier for the New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition. At that time it was part of the larger Boca del Oso collection of potential wilderness areas lying along the northwest/southeast trending Rio Puerco River. Fish had encountered rancher opposition to these candidates at that time. Tensions had only worsened once he founded the Public Land Action Network and personally, in his words, "declared war" on all ranchers grazing livestock on the public domain and seeking to get the animals permanently removed. The young Wilderness Alliance may have not known of this history and the depth of suspicion and animosity pervading rural communities or, more likely, did know and thought they could counter it.

It has been explained to me that ranchers have influence several orders of magnitude greater than their numbers. In the eyes of the public, much of the business community, and local governments, ranchers' interests and concerns often carry a great deal of weight. Ranchers tend to insist on independence and freedom from interference in their affairs. Potential threats or inconveniences that might disrupt that independence and freedom are not taken lightly. The general public is sympathetic to ranchers and their travails because of the perceived nobility of their way of life and its history, real or imagined. Whether this characterization is correct or not, something like it played out at the turn of the millennium.

The campaign ran into stiff opposition from ranchers and local governments from the beginning. Although the McKinley County Commission immediately came out in favor of the wilderness proposal, the Sandoval County Commission, the Village of San Ysidro, and the Bernalillo Town Council went on record early with resolutions against the wilderness proposal.¹⁰² Wilderness Alliance volunteers worked hard in the little communities whose support they needed, gathering 2000 petitions in favor of wilderness and holding a number of meetings with individuals, local groups, and people in public service. It was to no avail. Ranchers raged against wilderness. The Sandoval County Commission and the towns in question, Cuba, San Ysidro, and Bernalillo never changed their minds, and by 2004 the club was forced to fold its tent and withdraw.¹⁰³

While the Cabezón campaign was still hot in 2002, the Wilderness Alliance started a second campaign aimed at what turned out to be a more achievable goal, the Ojito wildlands midway between Cabezón Peak and Bernalillo.¹⁰⁴ The Ojito campaign was a relatively short, worthy test of campaign management. It was made successful through an imaginative negotiated settlement

involving the Zia Pueblo, the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of the Interior, and involving members of the congressional delegation. The agreement removed Zia opposition to the wilderness area and was a win-win for all. The key to success was a deal involving a 13,000-acre strip of land lying between the 12,000-acre proposed Ojito wilderness area and the Zia Pueblo reservation boundary. An agreement was reached that allowed the BLM to withdraw the offending strip from all protective classifications and sell it to the Zia Pueblo at market value. The land was then to be held in trust for the Pueblo by the Bureau of Indian Affairs under the requirement that it remain a relatively undisturbed and a suitable buffer for the wilderness area. When the agreement was presented to the Congressional delegation legislation was drawn up, jointly sponsored by Representative Tom Udall and Senator Jeff Bingaman, both Democrats. Senator Pete Domenici and Representative Heather Wilson, both Republicans, co-sponsored the measure. Only Representative Steve Pearce, Republican from District 2 opposed the legislation. The Ojito Wilderness Area Act was signed into law on October 26, 2005 marking the first Wilderness Alliance campaign success.¹⁰⁵ The small size of the wilderness involved, 11,183 acres, in no way detracts from the value of the accomplishment. Ojito is a jewel that allows the discovery of solitude in the presence of dramatic landscape and interesting biology and geology, while preserving the source of important paleontological discoveries. It was also a good education for the young Wilderness Alliance in a complex negotiation requiring imaginative solutions.

The George W. Bush administration (2001-2009) and Congressional Republicans were demonstrably hostile to environmental protections including wilderness. New Mexico's problem was even bigger, however. Senator Pete Domenici was a strong believer in converting parts of the public domain to development and resource extraction. As chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, wilderness bills from New Mexico had to pass his scrutiny as well as find strong local support. That didn't happen often and the next successful wilderness legislation for New Mexico had to wait until he left office in January, 2009.¹⁰⁶ During that same period other states were awarded the passage of 58 wilderness bills and New Mexico had to be content with only Ojito. In January of 2009 Barack Obama moved into the White House and Senator Jeff Bingaman from New Mexico assumed the chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Senator Bingaman was supportive of wilderness protections and had a highly competent and knowledgeable staff that made him a pleasure to work with. Sabinoso Wilderness legislation (16,030 acres and largely attributable to the work of Arturo Sandoval of Voces) passed through Congress and was signed into law in March.

In 2011 Republicans, heavily influenced by a Tea Party faction, took control of the House and put a stop to all wilderness legislation for two years, afterward allowing only three bills through during the next two years, one of them being New Mexico's Columbine-Hondo Wilderness. Those four years were the most hostile to wilderness of any era before or since the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964.¹⁰⁷

Brant Calkin and Bob Howard had both left a directive to protect the wildlands until they can be made wilderness areas. Even before the Congressional elections of 2010 the national conservation organizations had foreseen that Republicans would blockade wilderness legislation if they gained control of the House. The conservation community needed to find "workaround" solutions to make up for the loss of a legislative pathway to wildland protection. National

monument campaigns became the order of the day because of a president's ability to unilaterally designate a national monument.¹⁰⁸ The New Mexico Wilderness Alliance switched its two major wilderness campaigns to monument campaigns in January, 2011 and was the most successful grassroots organization in the country for the next three years. Two Wilderness Alliance-defined national monument candidates, Rio Grande Del Norte (242,555 acres) and Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks (496,330 acres), became the first two landscape-scale national monuments declared by President Obama, the former in 2013, the latter in 2014. Both had strong support from local communities and interest groups, thanks to excellent negotiating and organizing by the Wilderness Alliance. Jeff Steinborn and Nathan Small led the effort for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument, working and living in Las Cruces and Doña Ana County. John Olivas living in the tiny land-grant community of Chacon in Mora County, led the campaign for Rio Grande del Norte in the north. All three gentlemen were elected to public office while working for the Wilderness Alliance indicating the level of their commitment to their communities and their acceptance by those living there. The coalitions they assembled contained a large portion of the public at large and earned them the support of the New Mexico delegation (other than Representative Steve Pearce), especially from Senators Jeff Bingaman (who submitted the original Dona Ana wilderness legislation), Tom Udall, and Martin Heinrich, and Representatives Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan Grisham.

In 2014 Columbine-Hondo Wilderness (44,698 acres) near Taos also made it through the Congressional maze. It was one of only three wilderness area bills to squeeze through during President Obama's second term and an especially sweet success. This was a long-sought-after designation going back to the Wilderness Study Committee in the 1970's. It was also a surprise given the dark cloud of Congressional disfunction at the time. Again, many thanks to the skill and determination of New Mexico's Congressional delegation.¹⁰⁹ The Columbine-Hondo wilderness campaign was an example of never-ceasing, excellent organizing and negotiating. Local attitudes began to change after the arrival of John Olivas, the Wilderness Alliance northern field representative hired in 2008. Olivas was an fifth generation Hispanic native of Mora County living in the house his great grandparents built in two centuries earlier. He was a graduate biologist with a Master's Degree in Environmental Science and a former employee of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. During the course of the wilderness and national monument campaigns he was elected a member of the Mora County Commission 2010 and soon after made its chairman. Olivas was an excellent listener with a warm demeanor who easily demonstrated an understanding and genuine sensitivity to both the Hispanic and Native American communities whose support was previously lacking. With John leading the wilderness and monument campaigns they, and others, found someone they could respect and trust to protect their interests. Over time John brought into agreement conservationists, Hispanic ranchers and town-folk, Native American tribal councils, mountain bicyclists, county and local officials, and the Forest Service. Our New Mexico delegation, over time including Senators Jeff Bingaman, Tom Udall, and Martin Heinrich, and Representatives Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan-Grisham joined in and made the end results possible. Everyone was stretched a little, but in the end all the parties celebrated, first for Rio Grande del Norte National Monument, then for Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Area.¹¹⁰

In 2019 the wilderness dam burst with the passage of the John Dingell Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act. This legislation included provisions for 13 wilderness areas

originating from Wilderness Alliance campaigns (270,336 acres total). All but one of those wilderness areas resided within either Rio Grande del Norte or Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monuments. That brought total wilderness area contributions directly attributable to campaigns initiated by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance to 326,217 acres. New Mexico's total area under wilderness protection had grown to 1,970,368 acres. With two donations of land adjacent to Sabinoso Wilderness from the Trust for Public Land in 2017 and 2021, New Mexico's total acreage under wilderness protection is now 1,978,911 acres.¹¹¹

Although there have been no other wilderness additions since 2019, legislation introduced by Senator Martin Heinrich and Representative Xochitl Torres-Small upgrading White Sands National Monument to national park status did pass Congress and became law on December 20, 2019. Two years earlier fossilized trails of human foot prints were discovered within the White Sands boundaries that have since been dated as being made over 20,000 years ago. That is more than 7000 years earlier than the generally accepted time of arrival for humans in North America. The finding has the paleontological community reexamining its theories for how and when humankind arrived in the western hemisphere.¹¹²

Today the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance often goes by its nicknames, New Mexico Wild or NMWild, taken from its internet address nmwild.org. Its record of achievement is secure and admired. The national celebration of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act was held in Albuquerque in October 2014. Coming on the heels of the two recent national monument designations in New Mexico, the Wilderness Alliance was hailed by speakers as one of the premier grassroots conservation organizations in America.

In closing, it is fitting to recall that the NMWild grew out of the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee. Four of its founders, Dave Foreman, Bob Howard, Bob Langsencamp, and Wesley Leonard served on the board of the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee during its first decade. Bob Tafanelli, a fifth founder, had been a member and participated in the BLM wilderness inventories. The Wilderness Study Committee was a beehive of activity then, a powerhouse projecting influence and generating tangible accomplishments. Foreman and Langsencamp had both chaired its board and led several of its campaigns. The New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee had been their training ground. These five and other early-day WSC members that joined the Wilderness Alliance brought that experience and those skills and practices with them. The result, with the partnerships that have been built in recent years with Hispanic and Native American communities, and strong support from an able congressional delegation, has built a record of success that reflects well on the founders of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and their vision of what was possible. New Mexico and America is better for it.

Acknowledgements

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reviewed early versions of the manuscript, adding details of which I was unaware and sending me off to do more research: Dr. Rick Aster, Wesley Leonard, and Dr. Bob Tapanelli, are all founders of NM Wild. I thank them all.

In early 2015 Mark Allison, Executive Director of the Wilderness Alliance, and Ken Cole, board chair, provided the approval on behalf of the staff and board to pursue this project, part of a larger effort to document the historical roots of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and its recent monument and wilderness campaigns. This is a critical portion of that story. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to pursue it.

End Notes

¹ Bob Howard, personal communication, 2/20/2023. Howard was the founding board chair of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, itself born from an idea of Susan Morgan and brought to life by Dave, Nancy and friends.

² Clay Risen, "Dave Foreman, Hard Line Environmentalist, Dies at 75," *New York Times*, Sept. 28, 2022.

³ Dave Foreman, "Around the Campfire," *Wild Earth Special Issue: The Wildlands Project*, 1992, cover to page 2. See also Dave Foreman, "The Wildlands Project and the Rewilding of North America," *Denver Law Review*, v76, 2, January 1998, 535.

⁴ Bob Howard, personal communication regarding the involvement of Dave Parsons and himself in the creation of the Rewilding Institute, 2/18/2023. Afterward Parsons and Howard both served as Conservation Fellows. See also the Rewilding Institute website, <https://rewilding.org/bobhoward> and <https://rewilding.org/dave-parsons/>.

⁵ Dave Foreman, "About Dave Foreman's Around the Campfire," downloaded 1/2/2023 from the Rewilding Earth website, <https://rewilding.org/about-tri/about-dave-foremans-around-the-campfire/>. See also "Thank Goodness Nancy was here!" <https://rewilding.org/thank-goodness-nancy-was-here/>, and <https://rewilding.org/susan-morgan/>.

⁶ James Morton Turner, *The Promise of Wilderness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 202-210. Morton details the changing attitude of the mainstream conservation organizations and the rise of Earth First!. The role of national politics during this same period is examined in: James Morton Turner, *The Republican Reversal: Conservatives and the Environment from Nixon to Trump* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 8, 9, 14, 54-97. See also Christopher Manes, *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1990). *Green Rage* covers the entire period as seen by an active participant.

⁷ Susan Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs: Earth First and the Environmental Movement* (New York: Viking, 1993), 13-29.

⁸ Dave Foreman's association with the Black Mesa Defense Fund is presented in Jack Loeffler, *Headed Upstream* (Santa Fe: Sunstone Press, 2010), 149, and in "A Talk with Jack Loeffler (Part 1): Indigenous World Views, Desert Lessons, Direct Action," downloaded from *Rewilding Earth Podcast*, <https://rewilding.org/a-talk-with-jack-loeffler-part-1-indigenous-worldviews-desert-lessons-direct-action/>,

1/2/2023. Foreman's role in the Albuquerque Environmental Center the Wilderness Study Committee is given in "Conservationist to talk to Sierra Club Members," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, Santa Fe, Dec. 1, 1972.

⁹ Jack Kutz, *Grassroots New Mexico: A History of Citizen Activism* (Albuquerque: The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, 1989), 7-9. The New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee was initiated in 1968 and was founded in 1970 by members from a number of wildlife, hunter, and conservation organizations within the state and supportive of wilderness. It started as an "organization of organizations." Prominent among them were the New Mexico Wildlife Federation, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, the New Mexico Mountain Club, and local river running, caving, and climbing organizations. It sought to take advantage of citizen opportunities to nominate wilderness candidates under to terms of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and subsequent environmental laws. The Act made citizen consultation a part of the Interior and Agriculture Department's process for selecting wilderness candidates that were to be recommended to Congress by 1980.

¹⁰ Forman-Morton interviews, Howard interview, and personal communication from Bob Howard, 1/18/2023.

¹¹ Much of the text that follows is based on interviews with the following: Dave Foreman and Nancy Morton, 12/13 and 12/20 of 2017; Susan Morgan, 12/6/2021; Bob and Phyllenore Howard, 9/10/2016; John Wright, 3/25/2021; Greg Magee, 11/6/2015; Wesley Leonard, 1/21 and 3/3 of 2016; Bob Tafanelli, 6/11 and 6/12 of 2015. A recorded video conference was held with Bob Howard, Greg Magee, Wesley Leonard, and Bob Tafanelli on 2/3/2021.

¹² New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, *Wilderness Newsletter*, May 20, 1972, v1,3. Foreman's assignments and activities with the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee are also sprinkled throughout the entries in the NMWSC newsletters during the period from 1972 to 1978 when he was active with the group. A nearly complete collection of the newsletters during this period can be found in the Corry McDonald archives at the Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico. The NMWSC is incorrectly labeled as the NM Wilderness Society. Titles of collection contents can be viewed at https://nmarchives.unm.edu/repositories/22/resources/1665/collection_organization

¹³ New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, *Wilderness Newsletter*. April 1, 1975, v4,1. Corry McDonald Archives, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research, Corry McDonald Collection MS488BC, Box 4, Folder 14.

¹⁴ Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs*, 27.

¹⁵ Susan Morgan interview.

¹⁶ /Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs*, 122-134. Zakin gives a colorful rendition of the EF! creation myth.

¹⁷ Dave Foreman and Howie Wolke, "memo to the Hardcore, RE: Earth First," undated, no distribution list. The digital copy I have has a penciled note of "spring or summer 1980," downloaded on January 5, 2019 but apparently no longer available. The first newsletter of Earth First! titled *Nature More*, Volume 0, Number 0, July 1980, was a six-page epistle type-written and signed by Dave Foreman describing the organization and its goals and naming Susan Morgan as its future editor. This was followed by Dave Foreman, "Memo to the leading intellectual and literary lights of EARTH FIRST," dated September 1, 1980, no distribution list. Source: Environment and Society Portal, <https://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/5678> downloaded December 5, 2021.

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- ¹⁸ Martha F. Lee, *Earth First: Environmental Apocalypse* (Syracuse, New York: 1995), 86-87.
- ¹⁹ Dave Foreman and Bill Heywood, *Ecodefense: A Field Guide to Monkeywrenching* (Chico, California: Abzug Press, Third Edition, 2002).
- ²⁰ Susan Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs* (New York: Viking, 1993), 1-9 see also Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1991), 109-116, 124,125. Analyses of the results and ethics of ecotage are discussed by Curt Manes, *Green Rage: Radical Environmentalism and the Unmaking of Civilization* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1990) 164-190; Manes analysis was revisited by other authors, notably 28 years later by Keith Makoto Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical Environmentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018) 121-142. The involvement of Tompkins and Chouinard is presented in Johnathan Franklin, *A Wild Idea* (New York: Harper Collins, 2021), 119-121.
- ²¹ James Morton Turner, *The Promise of Wilderness* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012), 212-215. Also see Lee, *Earth First: Environmental Apocalypse*, 146-150. Direct action typically refers to peaceful protest.
- ²² Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists*, 134-141; Manes, *Green Rage*, 84-89, 99-102; see also Roderick Frazer Nash, *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989) 190-195.
- ²³ Both Nancy Morton and I heard this from Forest Service District Rangers in northern California and Oregon. Over a period of about 50 years trees in economically harvestable areas would be clearcut in patches (logging units) that would (if possible) allow natural regeneration of the fastest growing species. Over time the boundaries of logging units would converge covering all mountainsides and valley bottoms. By creating a patchwork of units in varying stages of replanted/sprouting, growing, or harvesting this cycle could conceivably continue indefinitely.
- ²⁴ Forman-Morton interviews.
- ²⁵ Dave Foreman, *Confessions of an Eco-Warrior*, 213-215; see also Dave Foreman and Nancy Morton, "Good luck darlin.' It's been great.", *Earth First Journal*, v10, 1990, 5.
- ²⁶ Jack Humphrey interview with Dave Foreman, "Episode 1: Dave Foreman on the History and Definition of Rewilding," Rewilding Earth Podcast, August 30, 2018. Available from Rewilding Earth website, downloaded on 2/9/2023 from <https://rewilding.org/episode-1-dave-foreman-on-the-history-and-definition-of-rewilding/>.
- ²⁷ Dave Foreman, *Rewilding North America: A Vision for Conservation in the 21st Century* (Washington: Island Press, 2004), 111-143. Foreman makes the case for rewilding for the lay reader. A more technical presentation of the basic concepts is found Michael Soulé, ed., *Conservation Biology: The Science of Scarcity and Diversity* (Sunderland, MA: Sinauer Associates, 1986).
- ²⁸ Greg Hanscom, "Visionaries or dreamers?" *High Country News*, April 26, 1999, accessed online 11/26/2022 at https://www.hcn.org/issues/153/4946/print_view.
- ²⁹ David Quammen, *Wild Thoughts from Wild Places* (New York: Scribner, 1998), 61. Quammen relates Soulé's comments. Also, Dave Foreman, "Around the Campfire," *Wild Earth*, 13-4, 2,3, adds more of the exchange.

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- ³⁰ Franklin, *A Wild Idea*, 119-121. Recall that this wasn't great timing for Dave. His trial over charges stemming from the 1989 FBI sting operation started in May and it would have been stressful from then until September when a plea agreement was reached that had the effect of reducing his sentence to a misdemeanor with five years probation.
- ³¹ Reed Noss, "A Regional Landscape Approach to Maintain Diversity," *BioScience*, 33, 11, 700-706.
- ³² *Wild Earth Special Issue: The Wildlands Project*, 1992. Included are an explanatory background overview by Foreman and articles by the founders and others describing the mission, goals, underlying biological science. A list of local affiliate organizations is provided and the means of communicating and working with them. Michael Soulé presents the vision statement (p. 7) and Reed Noss lays out the technical basis for the scientific program.
- ³³ Foreman and Morton interviews, 2017; Susan Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs: Earth First and the Environmental Movement* (New York: Viking, 1993).
- ³⁴ Morton, Nancy, Senior Instructor, Undergraduate Program Director, College of Nursing, Clinical and Translational Science Center, Health Sciences, University of New Mexico, 2016. Downloaded from the UNM Health Sciences VIVO website, 2/22/2023: <https://vivo.health.unm.edu/display/n4427>.
- ³⁵ Interview with the Howards, 9/10/2017 and personal communications during January, 2023. Sierra Club officer data from "History: Officers and Directors, Sierra Club website, <https://vault.sierraclub.org/history/officers.aspx>; accessed 1/25/2023. The NMWSC Newsletter of Feb.1982 lists Jack Kutz as chair, Judy Bishop as vice-chair, Sue Pfeiffer as Treasurer, LaDonna Kutz as Secretary, and Bob Howard as a member of the board.
- ³⁶ Corry McDonald, *Wilderness: A New Mexico Legacy* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Sunstone Press, 1985), 31.
- ³⁷ Corry McDonald, Chairman, Letter to Wilderness Study Committee, March 29, 1976, Corry McDonald Archives, University of New Mexico Center for Southwest Research, Corry McDonald Collection MS488BC, Box 4, Folder 12. In this letter to WSC Coalition leaders McDonald lists 35 member organizations with a combined membership "approaching 10,000." The letter announces the WSC Coalition 1976 Spring Wilderness Symposium in Albuquerque. In an April 9, 1976 letter to Senator Pete Domenici, McDonald's opening sentence reads "On behalf of the 10,000 persons in the thirty-five or so conservation organizations in New Mexico whom we represent on matters related to wilderness, we urge your support of timber management reform as reflected in S2926/HR11894." He also extends an invitation to the senator to attend the spring symposium and barbecue.
- ³⁸ New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, *New Mexico Wilderness Newsletter*, April 1, 1975, p.13, located in Box4 Folder 14 of the Corry McDonald Archives.
- ³⁹ Jack Kutz, *Grassroots New Mexico: A History of Citizen Activism* (Albuquerque: Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, 1989), 5-9.
- ⁴⁰ "Trio to be feted for Civic Endeavors," *Albuquerque Journal*, Wednesday, Dec. 9, 1970, E-2. Milo Conrad was an electronics technician who also was the New Mexico Mountain Club wilderness coordinator. Conrad was a trail runner and outdoorsman from Albuquerque. He was well known for establishing and organizing the annual La Luz Trail Run, a ten-mile race from the foot of the Sandia's to its Crest. He set the first records and continued to organize and manage the race for a decade, even after

being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis about 1970. A dedicated hiker and backpacker, Conrad was a strident voice for wilderness protection giving slide shows, talks, and writing letters to newspaper editors, politicians, and agency heads. During the 1960's and 1970's his name appeared frequently in the newspapers, often with Corry McDonald, and early leader of the organization. Conrad was declared by the WSC to be its founder and his signature on his many letters on behalf of the organization often carried that title. He received other honors for his humanitarian work and his conservation leadership. He died in 1994, more than two decades after he started his battle with multiple sclerosis.

⁴¹ New Mexico Wilderness Newsletter, June 1975, vol 5, n2, p.6. The results of the annual election for WSC officers is announced, Foreman's first communication as chair appears on p. 1,2. His transfer to Washington D.C. is announced in March 1978, vol 7, n1, p.5, newsletter, and his replacement, Bob Langsencamp, is announced in the June, 1978 vol 7, n2, p.4 newsletter, Corry McDonald archives. See also, Suzan Zakin, *Coyotes and Town Dogs*, 26,27, 85, 86.

⁴² John Wright interview, 3/25/2021, and Wesley Leonard, personal communication. Wright mentioned McDonald's authoritarian tendencies. Wesley has told me on several occasions that he believed McDonald and Foreman shared a mutual and strong dislike for each other. Dave was heard to indicate a deep frustration with a Sandia engineer that appeared to McDonald. In *Wilderness: A New Mexico Legacy*, p127, Corry expressed his distaste for "some hotheads who felt moved to action in methods which might have paled those in Ed Abbey's *Monkey Wrench Gang*. I think we know who he had in mind.

⁴³ Corry McDonald, *Wilderness: A New Mexico Legacy*, 74-75.

⁴⁴ Dick McAlpin, Tribune Staff Writer, "Lujan to do more research before making road decision," *Albuquerque Tribune*, June 16, 1971; "Lujan tells why he's against Crest Road," *Albuquerque Tribune*, June 17, 1971. Characteristic of Lujan was his carefully considered and fully explained decision to oppose the Ellis Loop Road in construction along the Sandia Crest through proposed wilderness and an existing game refuge. First he had the Forest Service fly him over the area, then they drove him through the clearcut that had been made prior to road construction, terminating at a planned observation point. Standing overlooking the northern escarpment, he said, "It's so beautiful I could stay up here forever," revealing his emotions if not his decision. That came the next day in Washington at his desk when he wrote USFS of his decision to reject the road, later giving the press his reasons.

⁴⁵ 96th Congress, Public Law 96-550, Dec. 19, 1980, An Act to designate certain National Forest System lands in the State of New Mexico for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes.

⁴⁶ Letter, Milo Conrad, Land Use Planning Representative and Founder, New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee, to Honorable John F. Seiberling, Chairman, Public Lands Subcommittee, House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C., Nov. 17, 1980. Conrad makes the WSC case for adding wilderness area protections to the most endangered wildlands in New Mexico not covered by the Domenici's bill, S-2583 which was being considered for the New Mexico Omnibus Wilderness Act; indeed, Domenici had targeted the Guadalupe Escarpment for "release."

⁴⁷ Republicans for Environmental Protection, *Congressional Scorecard 2006*, downloaded from Internet Archive, Wayback Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20070615183627/http://www.rep.org/2006_scorecard.pdf, 1/12/2023.

⁴⁸ Federal Lands Policy and Management Act of 1976, Public Law 94-579, Approved Oct. 21, 1976, 43 U.S.C. 1701 through 1782.

⁴⁹ "New Mexico Wilderness Review: Initial Inventory Decision," U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Santa Fe, July 9, 1979, p18.

⁵⁰ "New Mexico Wilderness Study Area Decisions," U.S. Dept. of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Office, November 1980. Table II: Intensive Inventory Decisions, page 1-5.

⁵¹ Undated newsletter, Wilderness Study Committee, May 1980 penciled in, similar to a 4-page letter from the chairman announcing officer election results and BLM decisions., Box4, Folder 14, Corry McDonald Archives.

⁵² *New Mexico Wilderness Study Area Report: Statewide Summary*, Bureau of Land Management, Sept. 1991, 2.

⁵³ "We need to accelerate our schedules to meet BLM deadlines," New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee Newsletter, April 1982, no volume or number markings, Box4, Folder 14, Corry McDonald Archives.

⁵⁴ Jim Fish, ed., *Wildlands: New Mexico BLM Wilderness Coalition Statewide Proposal* (self-published and printed locally, 1987). Financial support provided by individuals, Recreation Equipment, Inc of Seattle, The Wilderness Society, the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club with additional contributions from its groups in Albuquerque, El Paso, and Santa Fe, and the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee.

⁵⁵ Jim Fish, interview of August 11, 2015. Fish was a scientist by vocation and a writer and photographer by avocation. He joined the BLMWC in 1983 and was assigned the Boca del Oso Complex of WSA's along the Rio Puerco River plus the El Malpais area near Grants that was designated the El Malpais National Monument in 1987.

⁵⁶ I have not found a reference or a written record for this meeting but one may exist in the BLM State Office. Jim Fish was my source and these paragraphs are based on our interview of August 11, 2015. He remembered the year as 1988 but that it could have been 1989. Fish had built a beautiful, rustic little winery in Placitas and we talked about his experiences over a nice glass of red.

⁵⁷ Jim Fish interview, 2015.

⁵⁸ I have been unable to find any accounts or records that describe the actual events that contributed to the formation of the New Mexico Wilderness Coalition. It appears in print in 1989 with Dutch Salmon as statewide coordinator. The NMWC took on an expanded role not unlike that of the New Mexico Wilderness Study Committee. Judy Bishop was a member of the NMWC but apparently never its leader. Bob Howard believes that the BLMWC and the NMWC were the same, with simply a change in the public name.

⁵⁹ High Lonesome Books, Dutch Salmon's Country Sports Blog, a source for M.H. "Dutch" Salmon obituary, brief biography, list of honors, organization memberships, and a bibliography of his books and magazine articles. Accessed and downloaded on January 11, 2023, from <https://www.high-lonesomebooks.com>.

⁶⁰ For example, Wesley Leonard remembers the merged organization of 1995-1997 as the Wilderness Study Committee. Bob Tafanelli and Greg Magee refer to it as the Wilderness Coalition, as do most people. The press did not appear to have known about the merger.

⁶¹ Foreman/Morton, and Morgan interviews. Martin Heinrich was to later become an Albuquerque city councilor, a Congressional representative, then elected to fill retiring Senator Jeff Bingaman's seat in 2013. Heinrich's legislative ability and commitment to conservation have been invaluable to the passage of wilderness and environmental legislation.

⁶² "Agenda," *New Mexico Wildlands Conference*, The College of Santa Fe, September 22-24, 1995. The conference was sponsored by The Wildlands Project..

⁶³ SUWA: Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance. The Roadshow refers to Calkins barnstorming trip through America to raise awareness and opposition to pending legislation threatening Utah's red rock wildlands. Attendees to his 120 presentations were urged to organize and flood Congress with letters and visits by citizen activists lobbying for protection of the redrock wildlands. And they did.

⁶⁴ Wendy Brown went on to manage the USFWS endangered species recovery program for the Southwest Region. After her retirement Brown joined the board of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and at the time of this writing is serving as Board Chair.

⁶⁵ Susan Morgan, personal communication, 12/12/2022.

⁶⁶ Susan Morgan interview 12/6/2021 and Forman and Morton interviews, 3/14/2017, 3/21/2017.

⁶⁷ Scott Groene, "Brant Calkin," *Canyon Country Zephyr*, August-September 1999, online and downloaded on 1/26/2023 at <https://www.canyoncountryzephyr.com/oldzephyr/archives/zephyr-august-september-99.html>. Scott Groene gives a summary of Calkin's time with SUWA:

⁶⁸ "Local Folks," *Santa Fe Reporter*, Santa Fe, June 8, 1988.

⁶⁹ Brian Calvert, "Remembering friends, current and past," *High Country News*, Nov. 23, 2015, accessed at <https://www.hcn.org/issues/47.20/remembering-friends-current-and-past>, Feb. 02, 2023.

⁷⁰ Sorry, too many entries to deal with. You will have to go find them yourself:
<https://www.newspapers.com>

⁷¹ "History: Officers and Directors, Sierra Club website, <https://vault.sierraclub.org/history/officers.aspx>; accessed 1/25/2023. "Governor appoints SF man: names 4 others to vacancies," *The New Mexican*, Santa Fe, Jun. 28, 1970, (Governor Dave Cargo appointed Calkin to the Policy Board and Advisory Committee on Air and Water Pollution); Brant Calkin, "Commission Aids Wilderness Heritage," *Albuquerque Journal*, Albuquerque, Dec. 28, 1975. Governor Jerry Apodaca created the 15-member New Mexico Wilderness Commission in 1975 with Calkin as its chair. Its first meeting was held on 10/6/1975 and it functioned until 1977; Steve May, "Sierra Club seeks environmental bill," *The New Mexican*, Santa Fe, Sep. 10, 1972. Calkin was the member of the state Environmental Improvement Board task force that recommended the legislation. For reference to Calkin serving as Secretary of Natural Resources and assistant to Jim Baca, State Land Commissioner see "Election '86: Campaign Notes," *The New Mexican*, Santa Fe, Dec. 15, 1985.

⁷² Ray Wheeler, "Congress weighs the fate of Utah's wild lands," *High Country News*, Paonia, CO, Issue 50, December 25, 1995, available online from HCN archives at <https://www.hcn.org/issues/50/1537>. Be sure to read the four sidebars also.

⁷³ Scott Groene, "Brant Calkin," 1999.

⁷⁴ In all my interviews there was never a hint from those I talked to, in and outside the WC/WSC, that it was lacking in good intentions or purpose. The critique, when offered, was that the organization had lost its mastery of basic organizing and campaign leadership and was not focused.

⁷⁵ Foreman and Morton interview, 3/14/2017, interview with the Howards, 9/10/2017.

⁷⁶ Foreman and Morton and Howard interviews.

⁷⁷ I heard Dave express this opinion, privately and publicly, on several occasions over the years.

⁷⁸ The Howards, 9/10/2016; Foreman and Morton, 12/13 and 12/20/2017.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ The actual number present is unknown. The estimated number comes from Magee, Foreman, Morton, and Tafanelli. A normal attendance would probably have been 15-20. A large attendance from Albuquerque and places north helped swell the numbers.

⁸¹ This was not the only observation. In the 1980's David Brower toured with Foreman giving conservation presentations and lectures. Brower was, himself, famous as a public speaker. He had this to say about Dave's speaking abilities: "I will talk *before* Dave Foreman, but not after. Anybody who talks after Dave Foreman must be an anticlimax." Source: David Ross Brower, interviews conducted by Ann Lage in 1999, "Reflections on the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth, and Earth Island Institute" Regional Oral History Office of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, California, 2012, p. 187. Accessed on 2/4/2023 at: https://digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu/roho/ucb/text/brower_david.pdf.

⁸² Bob Tafanelli, personal telephone communication, January, 2023.

⁸³ Dave Foreman and Howie Wolke, *The Big Outside* (New York: Harmony Books, 1989, 1992) 361. The backpack through the north-south length of the West Potrillos was described in my interview of Dave on 3/21/2017.

⁸⁴ Rick Aster, personal communication, 12/3/2022.

⁸⁵ Interviews of Wesley Leonard, January and March, 2016.

⁸⁶ Interview of Greg Magee, 11/06/2015.

⁸⁷ Foreman and Morton, 12/13 and 12/20/2017, Magee interview and personal communication of 12/15/2022.

⁸⁸ Foreman and Morton interviews, Magee interview, the Howards interview, personal communications from Bob Howard, December 2022 and January 2023. Wesley Leonard, telephone communication, 12/15/2022.

⁸⁹ The Howards, 9/10/2016; Foreman and Morton, 12/13 and 12/20/2017.

⁹⁰ Bob Howard, "Chairperson's Report - 1/10/98," *New Mexico Wilderness Alliance*.

⁹¹ "Articles of Incorporation of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance," Filed in the Office of the NM State Corporation Commission, May 9, 1997, Corporation Department.

⁹² "New Mexico Wilderness Alliance," Pro Publica Nonprofit Explorer, Research Tax-Exempt Organizations, available online at <https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/850457916>.

⁹³ see "Articles of Incorporation, note 75.

⁹⁴ T.D. Mobley-Martinez, "Love for the land led Berman from science to art," and "A wilderness pinned down," *Albuquerque Tribune*, Albuquerque, 4/17/1998. See also Wesley Pulka, "Artists lens exposes human blot on NM landscape," *Albuquerque Journal*, Albuquerque, 4/12/1998. Berman was already famous for his black and white desert photography artistry and would later become a member of the Wilderness Alliance board.

⁹⁵ Bob Howard, "Chairperson's Reports of 3/28/98 and 6/6/98," *New Mexico Wilderness Alliance*.

⁹⁶ Bob Howard, "Chairperson's Report - 3/21/99," *New Mexico Wilderness Alliance*.

⁹⁷ All the founders that I talked with were highly complementary in their appraisal of Sullivan. That includes the Foreman and Morton, the Howards, Wesley Leonard, Greg Magee, and Bob Tfanelli.

⁹⁸ "Inventory Update: The BLM Inventory Is Complete," *Call of the Wild*, Newsletter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, v6, 1, Spring 2002, 6.

⁹⁹ Michael Scialdone and Greg Magee, interview of 11/06/2015 while camped in the foothills of the Black Range.

¹⁰⁰ Bob Howard, personal communication, 1/17/2023.

¹⁰¹ Bob Howard, "Chair's Report 12/02/2000" *New Mexico Wilderness Alliance*.

¹⁰² Patrick Armijo, "San Ysidro Fights Cabezón Wilderness Plan," *Albuquerque Journal*, February 1, 2002; see also Elaine D. Briseño, "Ranchers Gather to Fight Wilderness Proposal," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 21, 2002.

¹⁰³ A number of newspaper articles cover the growing battle: Tania Soussan, "Restraints on Rich Land," *Albuquerque Journal*, (Albuquerque, Aug. 5, 2001) 13; Patrick Armijo, "San Ysidro Fights Cabezón Wilderness Plan," *Albuquerque Journal*, Feb. 1, 2002; Elaine D. Briseño, "Ranchers Gather to Fight Wilderness Proposal," *Albuquerque Journal*, Dec. 21, 2002; Michael Davis, "Council Delays Cabezón Vote," *Albuquerque Journal*, April 25, 2003.

¹⁰⁴ The first notice of Wilderness Alliance involvement is in *Call of the Wild*, Newsletter of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, v6-2, Summer 2002, 9.

¹⁰⁵ Public Law 109-94, 109th Congress (S.156), The Ojito Wilderness Act, October 26, 2005.

¹⁰⁶ The example of Dona Ana County wilderness proposals is characteristic of Domenici's relationship with wilderness. In 2004 the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance and the Wilderness Society were beginning to organize support for the wilderness areas that would eventually become the basis for the wilderness areas designated by the 2019 John Dingell Act. In late 2005 Domenici began quietly preparing legislation that would create half as much protected area as the Wilderness Alliance proposal and release 65,000 acres of BLM land west of Las Cruces for development. This was representative of his views regarding the appropriate balance between wildlands and development. When his proposal was revealed in January 2006 and received strong local objection from the public, city and county governments, he entertained the formation of a group of stakeholders that would attempt to seek a county-wide consensus solution that he could consider. Stakeholder group meetings were convened until years end against a background of growing support for the Wilderness Alliance proposal. By January 2007, there was still not an all-parties-agreed-to-consensus. At that point Domenici walked away and dismissed any future negotiation as pointless. Consensus was, of course, impossible with the diversity and extreme range of stakeholder interests: home builders and realtors, ranchers, conservationists, sportsmen, chamber of commerce, neighborhood associations, and members of the public. Archives of the Las Cruces Sun-News in 2006 and early 2007 provide a long-running account of the events. The eventual result years later was the immensely popular 2014 designation of the Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks National Monument (496,300 acres) followed in 2019 by the John Dingell Act designating 241,500 acres of wilderness area inside the monument.

¹⁰⁷ In spite of the Reagan administration's alignment with the "Sagebrush Rebellion," the largest number of wilderness areas created during an eight-year period since 1980 occurred during the Reagan years. The second term of Obama saw the least, partially due to Republican opposition to wilderness on principle, and partially due to an intention to block any legislation that might boost the popularity of the Democratic party.

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Brian O'Donnell, then executive director of Conservation Lands Foundation, 4/6/2016. O'Donnell said that the national organizations had already made plans for this change before the election was held.

¹⁰⁹ I interviewed Sen. Martin Heinrich on May 27, 2018 and suggested that with Republicans so hostile to wilderness there must not be much chance for wilderness going forward. He strongly disagreed, describing how he keeps on working to find a way to advance his legislation and never gives up, ending with "I'm playing the long game." Heinrich said much same to Hayden Carpenter when interviewed about the chances his White Sands National Park legislation would be successful: Hayden Carpenter, "Our Next National Park Could Be in New Mexico," *Outside Magazine*, July 3, 2018. Accessed online 2/8/2023 at <https://www.outsideonline.com/2321341/could-white-sands-new-mexico-next-national-park>.

¹¹⁰ Stacy Matlock, "U.S. House clears bill that affects New Mexico wilderness," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, December 5, 2014; also J.R. Logan, "One of those really special places," *Santa Fe New Mexican*, November 26, 2014; also Linda Calhoun, "Warm welcome for new wilderness area," *Albuquerque Journal*, December 25, 2014; also, "Thank you, Sens. Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich, former Sen. Jeff Bingaman, and Reps. Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Grisham, for supporting our community and

protecting the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness." *Albuquerque Journal*, December 30, 2014. Political ad paid for by the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance, The Pew Charitable Trusts, and The Wilderness Society with 30 signatories representing 4 towns and villages, Taos County, Taos Pueblo, two chambers of commerce, the International Mountain Bicycling Association, two backcountry riding, hunting and fishing groups, 7 conservation organizations, two land grants, League of United Latin American Citizens, Amigos Bravos, and several business.

¹¹¹ "Secretary Haaland Celebrates Expansion of Sabinoso Wilderness, Advancing Effort to Conserve and Restore Public Lands," Press Release, U.S. Department of the Interior, 7/19/21.

¹¹² Katherine Kornei, "Footprints Mark a Toddler's Perilous Prehistoric Journey," *The New York Times*, New York, October 23, updated October 26, 2020. Dating of these footprints and other trails found at White Sands was revealed in: Lizzie Wade, "Human footprints near ice age lake suggest surprisingly early arrival in the Americas," *Science*, 23 September, 2021, available at <https://www.science.org/content/article/human-footprints-near-ice-age-lake-suggest-surprisingly-early-arrival-america>.