

# AWF Newsletter

SEPTEMBER 2008

Founded by Aldo Leopold in 1914 to protect and perpetuate our wildlife and natural resources

## GENERAL MEETING

- WHEN:** Thursday, September 11, 2008 — 7:30 pm
- WHERE:** Manzano Mesa Center (map p3)
- GUEST SPEAKER:** Eddy Williams, BLM Range Improvement Specialist
- PROGRAM:** Cheatgrass and NM's Noxious Weed Program

PHOTO BY IRENE SHONLE



Cheatgrass, a non-native originally from Eurasia, is rapidly becoming one of the biggest problem plants in New Mexico. First identified in the United States in the late 1800s, cheatgrass, also known as “downy brome” (*Bromus tectorum*), was found in every western state by the early 1900s. Choking out native plants is not even the worst of its effects...it dramatically changes the fire ecology of an area. Aldo Leopold brought awareness to the general public of the impact of downy brome in his essay “Cheat Takes Over,” where he addresses the ecological implications of its establishment with clarity and humor.

Eddy Williams will discuss this invasive grass and present the BLM strategy to deal with the plant. He'll also provide an update on laws and regulations, targeted species, federal vs state noxious weed lists, and a short review on BLM's new 17-state Vegetation Management EIS.



Born in Utah, Eddy moved to NM as an infant, and grew up in TorC, Dusty, Deming, and then Las Cruces. He currently works on the BLM Healthy Lands Initiative “Restore New Mexico” Team with Noxious Weed Coordinator duties for the state. He has been with the BLM for 31 years and has worked with noxious and invasive plants and vegetation manipulation projects since 1986. Eddy graduated from NMSU in 1977 with a Wildlife Science Degree, and is a member of NRA, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, Wild Turkey Federation, and NM Vegetation Management Association.

### Jim Hubert's NOTABLE QUOTE of the month

God writes the Gospel not in the Bible alone, but also on trees, and in the flowers and clouds and stars.

— Martin Luther (1483-1546)

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

One of Albuquerque Wildlife Federation's missions is restoration of wildlife habitat. Volunteers for service projects are our primary means of doing restoration work. And work it can be. Ask the 36 people who put in over 600 hours two weekends ago at the Valles Caldera National Preserve. The August weather in high mountains is always a concern, but for this project it was fairly cooperative. There was a serious storm Saturday around 2:30 AM. The thunder roared, followed shortly by lightning which meant the strikes were close, and there was pebble-sized hail.

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE** *(Continued from page 1)*

In about an hour the storm passed. Saturday evening the storm came earlier, drowning any hopes of a camp fire. But everyone was tired from the day's work so early to bed was welcome.

Speaking of work, the VCNP project was one of our more physically demanding projects, but also probably the most challenging in terms of improvising design and use of materials. We have built these types of protective fence enclosures before, but this was the first time in a bog, which made anchoring the corner posts difficult but also essential to the stability of the fence. Normally treated posts are used for the corners, but in this case corner posts were cut from dead spruce. In addition, the t-posts were too short, so we had to wire posts together to get near the desired fence height.

We were fortunate to have plenty of willing and able volunteers. We had one crew tearing down an old barbed wire fence. Once we realized our dilemma with the diminutive t-posts, the fence removal crew switched priorities to pulling out the old t-posts for use in the new enclosures. By Sunday afternoon around 3 PM, we had removed one mile of fence including rolling the wire and carrying the materials down to the road to be hauled away, and finished two enclosures to protect bog birch populations. I might add that these bog birch are the only known population in New Mexico. These shrubby trees can grow to almost 20 feet, but at this location most were hedged to less than three feet by elk browsing.

I often ask myself why people – many who are not members of AWF– come out and work their tails off. I wonder why we folks from AWF put so much effort into organizing and planning these projects. By the end of every project, I once again know. Protecting these bog birch populations exemplifies how challenging and rewarding this work can be. We are fortunate that our projects are located in special areas. As AWF Board Member Toby Rosenblatt said, the scenery at Alamo Canyon was the best so far.

For our organization to be the first volunteers allowed to camp on the Preserve is a privilege and important recognition of our reputation. I hope that we can return again next year and that our efforts and results will provide opportunities for other volunteer groups. The final piece to the puzzle is camping with and enjoying the company of many interesting people who share a love for the outdoors. *(See photos p. 4)*

Once again, I must give my thanks to Michael Scialdone (Scial) of the New Mexico Wilderness Alliance for partnering with us for the last three years. NMWA's publicity and recruitment efforts definitely increase the turnout for our projects.

Our stalwart crew of regulars enjoys new people and welcomes returnees. So join us for September's project at the Wind River Ranch – for further information see page 3.

– Gene Tatum

**IS THE NRA'S MISSION ANTI-CONSERVATION?**

*Columnist Bill Schneider, in the August 28, 2008, issue of NewWest.net newsletter, seems to think so,* claiming that the National Rifle Association supports anti-conservation, anti-hunting politicians. He cites a just-released report by the American Hunters and Shooters Association (AHSAs), whose press release states: "As the self-proclaimed 'largest pro-hunting organization in the world,' the [NRA] has long claimed to represent America's hunters and shooters in the fight to protect one of America's oldest traditions"...yet the NRA makes financial contributions to politicians rated as "poor" in conservation efforts.

Schneider uses "anti-hunting" to refer to people who consistently support or vote for measures that destroy wildlife habitat or limit hunting access, even if they own guns and say they "support hunting"—even, in fact, if they hunt.

To judge a politician's record on conservation, AHSAs used an annual survey conducted by the League of Conservation Voters (LCV) as the primary source for its conclusions. On the front page of the report, in fact, AHSAs states that the NRA gave campaign contributions to 52 of the 53 members of Congress who received a zero rating from LCV for their conservation voting records.

Inside the report, AHSAs offered three examples to support their conclusion. The NRA gave much more money to and gave much higher ratings to politicians who: ❶ in 2001, opposed the Roadless Area Conservation Act, which was defeated even though it would have protected millions of acres of our best hunting land; ❷ in 2005, tried to sell off hundreds of thousands of acres of public land to "corporate interests at prices far below market value," as stated in the report. "While conservation groups across America came out against the (sale of public land), the NRA stayed silent"; ❸ in 2007, opposed the so-called "Katrina Amendment" to prevent future catastrophic flooding and protect wetlands and wildlife habitat threatened by climate change.

The NRA is "out of line with America's most respected conservation organizations," says AHSAs, mainly because the nation's biggest gun lobby gave \$4,085,277 to support the 193 members of Congress who received poor conservation ratings from the LCV and only \$390,897, 10 times less, to the 245 members of Congress who have received high conservation ratings.

Schneider concludes by urging "hunters who are NRA members...to work hard inside to change the focus of the organization or stop paying membership dues."

## 2008 FIELD PROJECTS — TEAM UP FOR WILDLIFE

### SEPTEMBER 19-21 ● WIND RIVER RANCH

**THE PLACE:** AWF invites you to volunteer at the beautiful Wind River Ranch, headquarters of a non-profit conservation organization, comprised of five thousand tree-studded acres of canyon and prairie along the Mora River north of Las Vegas, NM. The Ranch is managed as a nature preserve and is used as a base for environmental education and outreach to local communities by ranch manager Brian Miller. This will be AWF's second year at Wind River Ranch.

We will camp near the ranch headquarters, where we will have access to bathrooms, as well as limited kitchen privileges. We may arrive on Friday afternoon and camp both Friday and Saturday evenings. Project activities will take place primarily on Saturday (Sunday optional), and we will carpool to the sites.



**THE PROJECT:** Bill Zeedyk advises that we will be constructing four excavated waterfowl ponds, in conjunction with a grant from NM Department of Game & Fish. We will do erosion control with the "spoil banks" (fill from the holes). There will be shrubs and trees provided for us to plant, and we'll also dig up and transplant various species of local aquatic plants. In addition, we plan on touch-up rock work in Petroglyph Canyon where we were last year, and also in Silva Canyon. And we'll build new rock structures in Falcon Canyon.

**EQUIPMENT:** Wear sturdy boots/shoes and bring gloves, hats, and sunscreen, and appropriate gear for camping. Be prepared for rain. Knee- or hip-high wading boots will be useful as well. Bug repellent is a good idea, too.

**TOOLS:** We can use shovels, rock bars, 5-gal buckets, and wheelbarrows if it's convenient for you to bring them. Make sure they're marked to be identifiable as yours.

**FOOD:** *Please bring your own water, and food for Friday dinner, Saturday lunch, and Sunday breakfast and lunch.* AWF will supply snacks and drinks during the project day. Michael Scialdone of NM Wilderness Alliance will fix his famous breakfast burritos Saturday morning. And plan on a fun and delicious potluck dinner Saturday evening—AWF will grill burgers and brats (veggie options also), **so bring along an appetizer, side dish, salad, or dessert to share.**



**TO SIGN UP:** Glenda Muirhead at 281-2925 | [g.muirhead@usfamily.net](mailto:g.muirhead@usfamily.net)

**DRIVING TIME:** 2 hours north of ABQ; 2 hours east of Santa Fe

**DIRECTIONS** Travel north on I-25 past Las Vegas. Take Exit 364 (at the south end of Watrous) and head west on Highway 161 toward Golondrinas. Go 5½ miles to Mile Marker #16, which is almost directly across the road from the WRR gate. The gate is on the north side of the road, has two white wooden posts and a white wooden cross-piece with a black W on top. The gate will be closed, but not locked. **PLEASE BE SURE TO CLOSE THE GATE BEHIND YOU (bison are roaming).** Drive in on the lane until you drop down into the canyon, about 2 miles in. We will camp in the vicinity of the red Headquarters buildings.

#### UPCOMING 2008 PROJECTS

SEP 19-21	WIND RIVER RANCH
SEP 27-28	NAVAJO LAKE STATE
OCT 24-26	CEBOLLA CANYON II

-  Albuquerque Wildlife Federation
-  NM Volunteers for the Outdoors

#### AWF MEETING LOCATION

Manzano Mesa Multigenerational Center  
501 Elizabeth SE at Southern  
(south of Central between Eubank and Juan Tabo)



#### AWF OFFICERS AND BOARD

**PRESIDENT** — Gene Tatum  
**VICE PRESIDENT** — Barbara Coulter  
**SECRETARY** — Linda Patterson  
**TREASURER** — Glenda Muirhead

#### DIRECTORS

Stephen Bohannon	Kurt Nolte
Larry Dwyer	Toby Rosenblatt
Patricia Hester	Jon Schwedler
Greg McReynolds	Luke Shelby
Dennis Muirhead	Bill Zeedyk

# VALLES CALDERA 2008 IN PHOTOS

For details of the weekend project, see the President's Message



PHOTOS BY PATRICIA HESTER

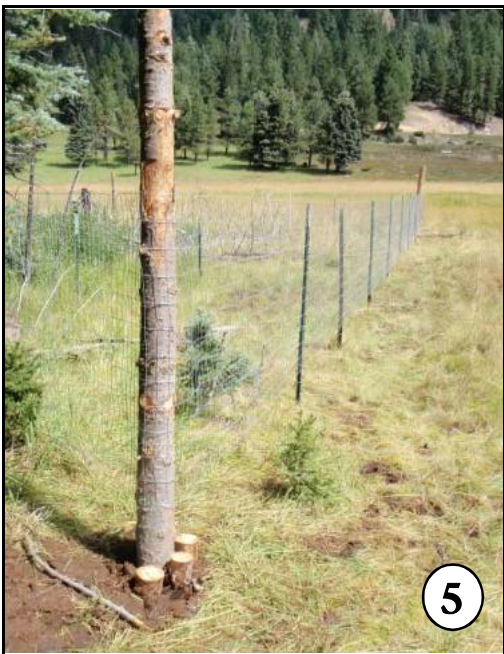


### THIS PAGE

- ① Norma McCallan and Renee Horvath roll a large, unwieldy coil of barbed wire down the hill for collection. One mile of old and dangerous fencing was removed, which might otherwise maim and trap wildlife.
- ② Close-up of sphagnum moss and other vegetation at the bog.
- ③ Installing and supporting the tall wooden corner posts for the enclosures was definitely a team effort.

### NEXT PAGE

- ④ Bill Zeedyk and Phil Carter insert a large log into the marsh at an angle, one of the ways the group developed to buttress the corner posts in the muddy bog.
- ⑤ One long edge of fencing on the largest enclosure built at Alamo Bog. The doubled-up metal T-posts are actually twice as long as they look—half their length has been pounded into the marshy ground.



### THANKS TO ALL THESE GREAT VOLUNTEERS!

Betsy Adamson	Laurie Marnell
Sam Beard	Norma McCallan
Stephen Bohannon	Robert McKee
Phil Carter	Michelle Miano
Jack & Darlene Crane	Sharon Miles
Tanya Critchfield and her cousin Andy	Glenda Muirhead
Bob Nordstrum	Toby Rosenblatt
Conor Flynn	Danny Ruppert
Patricia Hester	Tamara Saimons
Renee Horvath	Merrill Sapp
Enid Howard	Michael Scialdone
Toby Jorin	Jessie Slocum
Greg & Karen Kendall	Gene Tatum
Joanna Kramer	Hamish Thomson
Ken Kutac	Irene Wanner
Crawford MacCallum	Mary Whiteman
	Bill Zeedyk

### City of Albuquerque Open Space Division National Public Lands Day **A CELEBRATION** of Open Space, Urban Agriculture, Local Food, and Community Saturday, September 27 — 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm FREE

The City of Albuquerque Open Space Division presents the **1st Annual Urban Farm and Harvest Festival**.

**WHERE:** *Open Space Visitor Center* | 6500 Coors Blvd NW between Montaño and Paseo del Norte at the end of Bosque Meadows Rd. Parking will also be available at the *Spiritual Renewal Center*, located at 6400 Coors Blvd SW, just south of the Visitor Center. Turn right off of Coors at the sign that says: *Private Road and Retreat Center*. **CONTACT:** Kent Swanson, 452-5216. Email: [kswanson@cabq.gov](mailto:kswanson@cabq.gov). For more information about the event, see [www.cabq.gov/openspace](http://www.cabq.gov/openspace).

Did you know that in addition to other important public lands, the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division preserves over **366 acres of farmland** within the Albuquerque area? Open Space is proud to be a part of Albuquerque's agricultural heritage, and this year they are celebrating with a **unique event for the whole family**. For the inaugural year of this event, they have joined forces with local farmers, local businesses, and conservation organizations to bring attention to the importance of preserving our agricultural heritage. During this event you can:

- ▶ Visit with local farmers
- ▶ Participate in free workshops
- ▶ Talk to organizations working to preserve agriculture
- ▶ Learn more about Albuquerque's Open Space program at the beautiful Visitor Center
- ▶ View birds and wildlife at the Visitor Center's 24 acre farm and wildlife preserve

Additionally, there will be **activities for all ages** including live music, arts and crafts for the kids, face painting and henna art by Have on Art, food demonstrations, apple harvesting, an apple cider press, and more!

Enjoy the following performers on the grassy lawn overlooking the 24-acre working farm/wildlife preserve:

2:30 – 3:30 pm: Big Daddy Long Loin/Recycle Man ("One Man Big Band")  
3:45 – 4:45 pm: Aztec Dancers (drumming and dance)  
5:00 – 6:00 pm: The Rivet Gang (Bluegrass)  
6:00 – 7:00 pm: Antares (Jazz and Blues)

**Workshops and Demonstrations:** Throughout the day you can participate in free workshops including a composting demo, wild plant harvesting, water harvesting, and more! Please see [www.cabq.gov/openspace](http://www.cabq.gov/openspace) for a full schedule of the workshops.

September 27th is also *Farm and Wildlife Day* at the Maize Maze on the Los Poblanos Fields Open Space. Call 917-3488 or see [www.riograndefarm.org](http://www.riograndefarm.org) for more details.

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

ALBUQUERQUE WILDLIFE FEDERATION, PO BOX 1234, ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87103

An affiliate of New Mexico Wildlife Federation

Please choose between **AWF MEMBERSHIP ONLY** or **AWF + NMWF MEMBERSHIP**. **AWF MEMBERSHIP ONLY** does **not** include membership in NMWF. **AWF + NMWF MEMBERSHIP** includes **one** voting membership in NMWF, for which \$10 of your dues payment goes to NMWF. For Family Membership, if a second person\* desires NMWF voting rights, an additional \$10 payment is required.

➤ **PLEASE ✓ ONE :**  **AWF MEMBERSHIP ONLY**     **AWF + NMWF MEMBERSHIP** ↴

Designate NMWF member(s\*) \_\_\_\_\_

name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

address \_\_\_\_\_

city, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_

phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

Gift membership from: \_\_\_\_\_

✓ **MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES**

- Student [under 18] ..... \$10 ← [AWF Membership Only]
- Individual ..... \$25
- Family ..... \$35
- Sustaining ..... \$50-\$99
- Patron ..... \$100
- Lifetime..... \$500 ← [One-time Payment]

Dues \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Second NMWF Member \$10 \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL ENCLOSED \$** \_\_\_\_\_