



MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, March 10, 2011 — 7:30 pm
Manzano Mesa Center (map p2)

NOXIOUS SPECIES — AWARENESS AND ACTION

Guest Speaker: Eddy Williams, NM Vegetation Management Association



Invasive alien species include plants, animals, or other organisms that are introduced outside their original range and cause harm in their new home. Because they have no natural enemies to limit their reproduction, they usually spread rampantly. Invasive alien species are recognized as one of the leading threats to biodiversity and impose enormous costs to agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and other human enterprises, as well as to human health. The cost to control invasive species and the damages they inflict upon property and natural resources in the U.S. is estimated at \$137 billion annually.

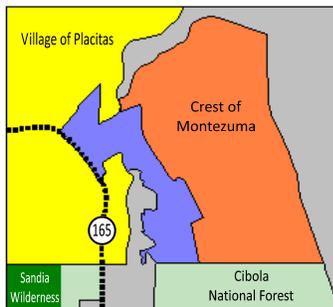
Eddy Williams will talk to us about Noxious Species awareness, including invasive plants and animals such as the zebra mussel. He will explain why it is so important for us to assess what we have and determine how we can help preserve what we consider important in our environment.

Newly retired (in January 2011) from 34 years with the Bureau of Land Management, Eddy brings a wealth of experience in combating noxious vegetation and conserving New Mexico's public landscapes. He worked on the BLM Healthy Lands Initiative Restore NM Team with Noxious Weed Coordinator duties for New Mexico. Since 1986, his main focus was on noxious and invasive plants and vegetation manipulation projects.

A resident of New Mexico since he was three weeks old, Eddy has lived in several places in the state. After graduating from Mayfield High School in Las Cruces, he spent three years in the US Army from 1971 through 1974, and in 1977 earned a Wildlife Science Degree from NMSU. Eddy is a member of Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Mule Deer Foundation, and NM Vegetation Management Association. He also enjoys hunting, fishing, gardening, and playing with his two grandchildren and the family dogs.

Coming next month: Elise Goldstein, NMDGF — Desert Bighorn Sheep

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I have had several inquiries from AWF friends and partners asking for our support in the transfer of the Crest of Montezuma to the National Forest from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In fact, enough public concern has been generated about protecting this parcel that our Representative, Martin Heinrich, has proposed legislation to transfer the land to the Cibola National Forest from the Albuquerque BLM.

In late January, I met a member of Mr. Heinrich's local staff. We spoke about the Crest and the legislation. As a result, Representative Heinrich provided us a guest article, included in this newsletter on page 5.

(Continued on page 2)

Jim Hubert's

Notable Quote of the Month

"Right now, the law actually works against residents in about two-thirds of the hunts. It actually gives nonresidents better odds. I don't think that was ever the intent of the legislature in 1997, when they passed the law we have now, to discriminate against residents."

—Jeremy Vesbach, Executive Director,
New Mexico Wildlife Federation
Quoted in Albuquerque Journal,
January 25, 2011.

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

The land in question is part of a significant wildlife corridor between the Ortiz and Sandia mountain ranges. From my perspective the best use of this area is as wildlife habitat.

The article mentions how the land was acquired by the BLM from Kewa Pueblo to complete a land transfer. A fairly large block of BLM public land containing high-value mineral materials—sand and gravel—was transferred from BLM public ownership. The lands transferred are located near I-25, south and east of Budaghers, along State Highway 22. Considering the politics, I was actually surprised that BLM received anything in return for the public lands. For this accomplishment, the BLM managers deserve praise.

In spite of my approval of BLM'S Crest of Montezuma acquisition, I have concerns that this parcel may be targeted for disposal by BLM and withdrawn from the wildlife corridor. Except for being much smaller in total acres, the Crest is of a similar land type to the disposed BLM public land near Budaghers. In addition to being relatively small, the Crest is an isolated tract with private lands bordering three sides. The USFS Sandia Ranger District adjoins the southern edge.

Other similar public lands near this area have been identified by the BLM as suitable for disposal. Tracts thus identified are typically used as trading stock for lands that have been targeted for acquisition by the BLM. Typically, non-public lands would be acquired to consolidate public lands ownership, which improves the opportunity for land management. An example would be to acquire private or state lands found in or along the edge of sectors being managed as BLM wilderness.

With this in mind, I suspect that the BLM has been interested in trading the Crest of Montezuma to the Forest Service for a block of land outside of Cuba, New Mexico. The BLM could likely include a small tract of public land west and contiguous to the Forest Service Manzano Wilderness. However, Forest Service boundaries usually have to be adjusted by Congress. Representative Heinrich's proposal is necessary to include the Crest of Montezuma in the Cibola National Forest.

When considering the future, BLM public lands like the Crest of Montezuma are likely to be disposed—particularly since BLM has great latitude in such actions and is vulnerable to pressures from other entities, e.g., land developers and mining interests, especially sand and gravel use for roads and home construction. If not added to the Sandia Ranger District, the lands would probably become private, and the land's value as wildlife habitat will be gone.

Gene Tatum

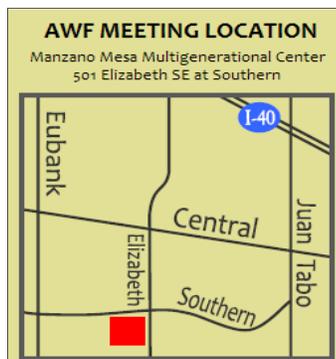
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**CELEBRATE ALDO LEOPOLD ON THE BOSQUE!**

Saturday, March 12

BYO Picnic Lunch at 1:15 pm — Hike at 2:00 pm

AWF member Nancy Carrillo invites us to join her hiking group on Saturday, March 12, to emulate other communities nationwide who celebrate an **"Aldo Leopold Weekend"** early in March.

Nancy has organized a trail hike through the Aldo Leopold Forest on Albuquerque's Bosque, just south of Montano along the Rio Grande's eastern edge. As you may know, there are several commemorative signs along the way highlighting some of Leopold's best-known 'single-sentence' gems. Everyone is also invited to do a somewhat longer reading as well. Let Nancy know if you would like to do a reading. (Contact Nancy at nancy@apexeducation.org)

The event will kick off with an optional BYO picnic lunch at 1:15 pm, with the hike starting at 2:00. Meet at **Pueblo Montano Picnic Area**, located on Montano Road east of Coors Boulevard, and west of the Rio Grande. (This is the park with the chainsaw animal carvings just west of the Montano Bridge, on the south side.)

ABQ Open Space naturalist Bill Pentler will meet the group at 2:00 pm at the park, on the north end of the trail. Bill will talk about Leopold's contributions to Albuquerque, Open Space efforts to reclaim the land, and how the bosque works. He'll also identify plants and creatures for us along the way.

Dog on leash are welcome. Terrain is sandy and flat. Duration: about 2-1/2 hours.

RENEWED MEMBERS

Howard & Misako Bradley
 Van Clothier
 Brian Gleadle
 Cecil Haas—Patron
 Crawford MacCallum
 Ron Madsen
 Kurt Nolte
 Linda Patterson
 Michael Scialdone
 Aija & Philip Thacher—Sustaining

Thank You!

Volunteer Project #1

MONTESSORI OF THE RIO GRANDE WETLANDS UPKEEP SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2011

AWF kicks off the 2011 Volunteer Service Projects season with a local project at the Montessori of the Rio Grande public school. About 10 years ago, the school received a grant from the US Fish & Wildlife Service to develop a wetland. Ever since it has been an ideal setting for children to learn about and appreciate nature. Longtime AWF volunteer Marcie Amendolagine brought this project to our attention. It fits right in with AWF's education mission and we are very excited about helping the school. It is a local one-day project and we need around 30 people, so please sign up!

WHERE: The school is located between the Rio Grande and Rio Grande Blvd NW, just north of I-40. More detailed directions will be sent to you when you sign up.

START TIME: 10:00 am

We'll let the morning chill pass. There is a lot of work to do, but if we get a good turn-out, we should be done by mid-afternoon. Please arrive promptly to allow time for signing in before we get an overview and guidance from our project leaders.

END TIME: 3:00 pm

THE PROJECT: The path around the wetland needs to be cleared. A plastic liner used on the surrounding mound will be removed as well as some lava rock. Mulch and rock will be brought in. Cattails will be cleared from the pond.

GEAR: Bring the usual field gear – gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. If you're willing to help clear the cattails, bring rubber boots or waders and neoprene gloves if you have them.

TOOLS: Loppers, hand shears, rakes, brooms (hardy push brooms), and shovels will all be needed. Wheelbarrows will be essential. If you have one that you'd be willing to bring, let Scial know when you sign up.

FOOD: Volunteers, please bring your own lunch. You can break whenever you'd like to. AWF will provide snacks, ice water, and drink mixes (please bring your own mug or water bottle).

TO SIGN UP: Contact

Michael Scialdone ("Scial") at 505-232-8756
or rioscial@gmail.com

2011 PROJECT SCHEDULE

MARCH 19	Montessori of the Rio Grande—Wetlands
APRIL 29-MAY 1	Cebolla Canyon I
MAY 20-22	Bear Trap Canyon—Magdalena RD
JUNE 17-19	Rio de Las Vacas
JULY 15-17	Valles Caldera I
AUGUST 19-21	Valles Caldera II
SEPTEMBER 16-18	Cebolla Canyon II
OCTOBER 15	Cedro Creek + End-of-Season Celebration



Wetlands at Montessori of the Rio Grande



PHOTOS BY GENE TATUM

NEW MEXICO LEGISLATURE IN SESSION

SENATE AND HOUSE BILLS WOULD GUT NM ENDANGERED SPECIES PROGRAM

Two identical bills introduced in the NM Senate and House during the current legislative session could be very bad news for fragile species in the state.

Says Mark Watson, of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish:

“These bills would kill our Endangered Species program by eliminating our ability to use federal funds.”

- HB 567 - STATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES (Rep. Zachary Cook)
2/17/11 – Introduced and assigned to **House Energy and Natural Resources Committee**
- SB 565 - STATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES (Sen. William Burt)
2/17/11 – Bill introduced and assigned to **Senate Conservation Committee**

“This bill would amend the Wildlife Conservation Act, requiring the state to take primary responsibility for listing, protecting, and managing Threatened and Endangered Species in New Mexico. It would remove authorization for the [Game] Commission and the [Game] Department to consult with, assist, or enter into agreements with federal agencies concerning threatened or endangered species, and would require a complete investigation process for including any species already listed federally (the Commission could no longer adopt the federal list.)”

HERGER AMENDMENT 177 THWARTS TRAVEL MANAGEMENT EFFORTS

In a Roll Call vote on February 18, the US House of Representatives passed, by a vote of 227 to 197, an amendment to the FY 2011 Continuing Resolution that would **prevent the Forest Service from using any of its budget to enforce or implement the travel management plans** recently completed for nearly every national forest in the country. The amendment will be added to HR 1, which recently passed the House and will be debated by the Senate. Opponents fear this result will:

- threaten drinking water resources, big game species, and other key resources;
- confuse the public by not having clear maps showing where they can drive;
- tie the hands of land managers who are trying to protect public safety and recreational experiences for all;
- **render wasted the public's six years of time spent participating in this process.**

GRANT COUNTY MEASURE OPPOSES USFS GILA ROAD PLAN

*Excerpts from an article by Terrance Vestal, Silver City Sun-News
February 25, 2011*

SILVER CITY - The Grant County Commission passed a resolution calling for the U.S. Forest Service to leave trails and roads in the Gila Forest alone until the department does its homework.

The resolution addresses concerns commissioners have and have heard from residents regarding the proposed Travel Management Plan the Forest Service is developing for the Gila National Forest.

The Forest Service's Draft Environmental Impact Statement released recently lays out six alternatives, ranging from the status quo to substantial changes in where motorized vehicles can be used. [However, says] County Commission Chairman Brett Kasten, “The Draft Environmental Impact Statement before us today is a flawed and incomplete document. It fails to adequately address the historical cultural needs for camping and recreation for the people in southwest New Mexico. The inventory of roads is incomplete and the document should, at a minimum, start with the roads that are currently on the ground.”

Commissioner Gabriel Ramos, who pushed for the resolution at a work session earlier this week, waved a stack of 24 pages of roads the U.S. Forest has acknowledged are not on the Environmental Impact Statement maps.

... Donna Stevens, of the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance, said road and trail use by motorized vehicles near rivers and streams degrades natural habitats and damages watershed quality. She said these roads can alter water courses and increase flood damage down stream. Stevens also emphasized economic benefits of restricting motorized vehicle use. She said, according to her research, “non-motorized” recreation creates more jobs and injects more labor income into the local economy than motorized-vehicle recreation. “There is a lot of money spent on outdoor activities,” Stevens said. “And remember, restoration is expensive, prevention is free.”

Commissioner Christy Miller, however, said that the resolution that the commission ultimately passed was not taking a stand either for or against road closures. She said it was about the Forest Service completing the study so informed and proper decisions could be made.

Kasten agreed, adding that the science the study is based on is inadequate and often is based on areas of the country that have nothing resembling the Southwest. “The lack of use of the best available science, the sources used for reference and the lack of peer review are, at best, questionable,” Kasten said. “The public deserves better.”

PRESERVE THE CREST OF MONTEZUMA

Guest Column

U.S. Representative Martin Heinrich (NM-1)

February 8, 2011

Want to support these preservation efforts? See page 6.

The Sandia Mountains have always been a critical part of my family's life here in central New Mexico...While I served on the Albuquerque City Council, I was lucky to be a part of several efforts to protect hundreds of acres of Open Space that formed a critical buffer to the Sandia Mountain Wilderness and helped to connect its wildlife to populations in the nearby Manzano Mountains.

That process of giving these great mountains their due has been just that, a process—and it continues to this day.

Eight years ago Kewa Pueblo bought 900 acres of ridgeline that extend north from the Sandia escarpment, known as the Crest of Montezuma. This treasured landscape just northeast of the village of Placitas and adjacent to the Cibola National Forest was transferred to the Cibola National Forest was transferred to the Bureau of Land Management through an exchange four years later.

It is clear that the people of central New Mexico know well the value of these 900 acres. Many local residents have shared their concerns with me about the future of this land. Most concerning to them are the ways in which access could be restricted for recreational uses and that a critical corridor for wildlife would be endangered. Gravel quarries or development could replace the trails, junipers, and mule deer that occupy the area now. The fear is that without the proper management we could lose the backdrop to the historic and beautiful Placitas village.

That is why I recently reintroduced legislation to shift management of the Crest of Montezuma from the BLM to the U.S. Forest Service and to withdraw the Crest from development for mining or quarrying. The Forest Service currently manages thousands of similar acres in the Sandia Mountains for recreation and conservation purposes. By shifting the management of the Crest of Montezuma to the Forest Service, New Mexicans can be sure that the land is not sold to private interests or developed for mineral resources.

Particularly in New Mexico, families have long histories of using public lands for hiking, camping, hunting and other traditions, both new and old. The Crest of Montezuma, which is adjacent to the Sandia Ranger District of the Cibola National Forest, should be a place for local residents to enjoy and for mountain wildlife to flourish.

As Teddy Roosevelt said in 1912, "We do not intend that our natural resources shall be exploited by the few against the interests of the many... for our aim is to preserve our natural resources for the public as a whole, for the average man and the average woman who make up the body of the American people."

Transferring the management of the Crest of Montezuma to the Forest Service could improve the quality of life for all who enjoy recreating, for all who benefit from the tourism dollars it brings, and for all who pass down New Mexico's outdoor traditions to their children in such a spectacular setting.

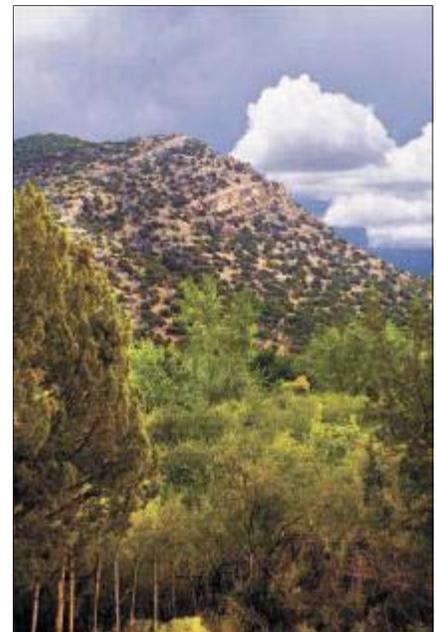
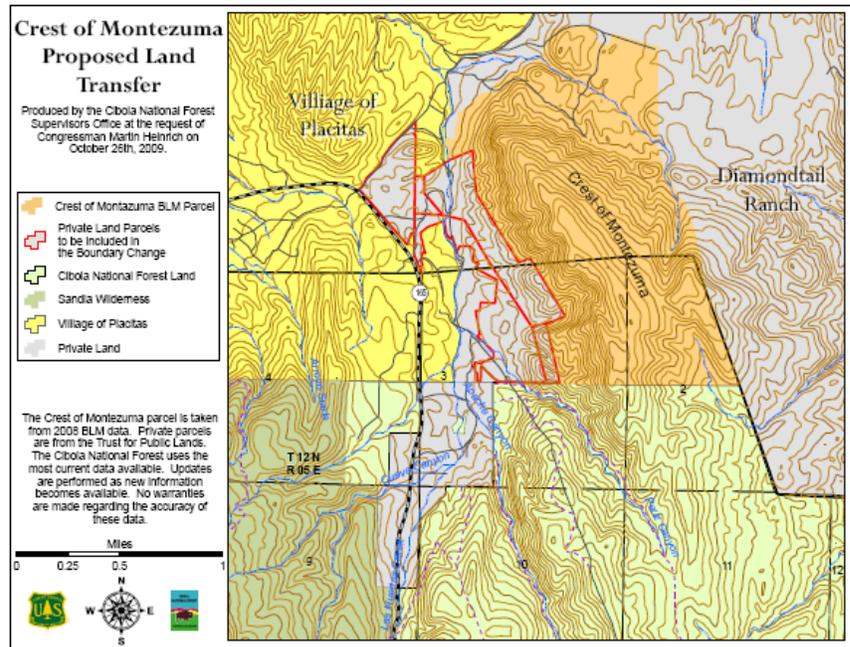


Photo Courtesy of The Sandoval Signpost

United States Representative Martin Heinrich (NM-1) serves the community of New Mexico's First Congressional District that his family calls home. Learn more at <http://Heinrich.house.gov>.

You Can Write a Letter to Support Rep. Heinrich's Bills

Martin Heinrich has submitted two bills in the US House of Representatives: HR 490 and HR 491.

HR 490 proposes to modify the boundaries of Cibola National Forest in the State of New Mexico, to transfer certain Bureau of Land Management land for inclusion in the Manzano Mountain Wilderness and for other purposes. Specifically, HR 490 would expand the Manzano Wilderness by 1000 acres.

HR 491 proposes to modify the boundaries of Cibola National Forest in the State of New Mexico to transfer certain Bureau of Land Management land for inclusion in the national forest and for other purposes. Specifically, HR 491 would transfer land in the Crest of Montezuma Ridge near the town of Placitas from the Bureau of Land Management to Cibola National Forest to protect the lands from potential mining threats.

If you would like to write letters to the House Committee on Natural Resources, go to naturalresources.house.gov/UploadedFiles/112thCongressMembersList.pdf for the names of committee members. We have been advised that your letters may be sent locally (for bulk forwarding) to:

John Gould
1800 Wildwood SW
Albuquerque, NM 87105

Free Conservation Textbook Online

AWF member Christianne Hinks sends notice that Oxford University Press is making a Conservation Biology textbook freely available...apparently in support of this being the International Year for Biodiversity. Feel free to pass this message on to schools, wildlife clubs and others, and/or print it and give it!!

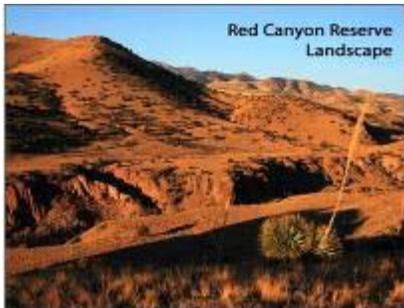
Sodhi, N. S. and P. R. Ehrlich (Eds.) Conservation Biology for All. Oxford University Press (2010)

Download the 350 pp book free at:
<http://www.mongabay.com/conservation-biology-for-all.html>

Did you know?...

The 2010 year-end Mexican Gray Wolf count has been released by the US Fish & Wildlife Service. Fifty wolves were counted in the wild.

It is heartening to see this modest improvement in numbers, in spite of the illegal wolf killings which took place in 2010.



The Quivira Coalition

Help create water sources for wildlife

You are invited to join the Quivira Coalition for a free Riparian & Wildlife Habitat Restoration Workshop on Red Canyon Reserve, March 25-27.

This workshop is part of a New Mexico Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program Grant to improve breeding and winter habitat

for a diverse group of wildlife species by enhancing riparian wetland areas and increasing the distribution and availability of permanent and fully accessible water sources. These enhancements will create a wildlife corridor to allow travel between adjacent public and private lands.

The top priority for the workshop will be the installation of four wildlife drinkers at various locations. Participants will help install over 5,000 feet of "ground level" pipe to and from the well tanks and drinkers.

Red Canyon Reserve is a 45 minute drive from Socorro just off Interstate I-25 and State Road 107. Project coordinators include Steve Carson of Rangeland Hands, Inc., Cullen Hallmark and Michael Bain.

REGISTER AT :

http://quiviracoalition.org/Land___Water/Restoration_Workshops/index.html. Once registered, you will receive workshop information along with directions and a map to the property.

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

An affiliate of New Mexico Wildlife Federation

I'd like to belong to AWF ONLY or I'd like to belong to AWF + NMWF: *Designate NMWF member(s)* _____

name(s) _____

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phone _____ email _____

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

Student [under 18]..... \$10 ← AWF Membership Only

Individual..... \$25

Family \$35

Sustaining \$50-\$99

Patron..... \$100

Lifetime \$500 ← One-time Payment

Dues \$ _____

Contribution \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____