

# AWF

# ewsletter

## MAY 2012

### MONTHLY MEETING

Thursday, May 10, 2012 | 7:30 pm | Manzano Mesa Center

### Tamarisk Leaf Beetle: Complications and opportunities presented by expansion of this species into New Mexico

**Guest Speaker: Dan Ginter, Pueblo of Santa Ana**



Riparian habitat in the Southwest has been severely impacted over the last 100 years by the introduction of tamarisk or salt cedar, an invasive, non-native species which can form large monotypic stands that choke out native vegetation and impact native wildlife. Managers have used a wide variety of control methods; the use of a biological control to suppress tamarisk trees has been discussed for years. The tamarisk or saltcedar leaf beetle, *Diorhabda*, has been tested for 20 years and has recently been released at test locations in the West. The beetle has successfully defoliated huge stands of tamarisk where it has been released and killed large numbers of the trees. So what's the problem? Unfortunately the beetle has done so well that it has begun to move out of the release areas and into regions where it now threatens the endangered Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, which likes to nest in tamarisk trees. Join us for Dan Ginter's talk to learn about where we go from here.

Dan works for the Pueblo of Santa Ana in the Department of Natural Resources, and is involved in a variety of projects including deer, elk and antelope monitoring and habitat modification, willow flycatcher surveys, gray vireo surveys, Rio Grande silvery minnow surveys, and range management. He received a degree in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from the University of Arizona and a Master's in Wildlife Science from New Mexico State University. A member of AWF, Dan has over 12 years of wildlife and botany experience working in the Southwest, and has conducted surveys for an array of threatened and endangered species.

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I had to be in Los Alamos over the weekend. I figured since I was there, I would head to a piece of the Santa Fe National Forest I had never been to. It is a block of the SFNF that is between Los Alamos and Santa Clara Pueblo lands to the north. The maps I had weren't very good at showing how to get to this land from Los Alamos. I drove around the town and more or less stumbled onto what I was after. I like big views when I camp so I continued down the canyon I had dropped into in hopes of connecting with a road shown on the map that led to a ridge.

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### Jim Hubert's Notable Quote of the Month

"These threatened wilderness areas are critical uplands connected to the crown jewel bird-watching areas of New Mexico. Opening these areas up to development could certainly impact the unique nature of this region, which draws tourists from across the country and around the world."

— Karyn Stockdale, Audubon NM executive director, warning about removing protection from more than 83,000 acres of bird habitat near Bosque del Apache NWR and nearly 60 million acres across the West, which is proposed in H.R. 1581, dubbed the "Great American Giveaway."

*East Mountain Telegraph, April 19, 2012*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE *continued*

I came to the junction of this road and was happy to see that it was likely drive-able by my sedan. Soon I came to an open gate. Partly blocking the road was a pole laying down. It had a few hundred pounds of cement around its base. It dawned on me this was the pole that the gate was locked to. I'm guessing someone used a winch and some digging bars to pry out the pole--cement and all--and push it over to the other side of the road. Whether or not the Forest Service wanted it to be, the road was now open and there was no shortage of tracks going past. I enjoyed a rather grand sunset from the ridge.

There are many reasons for closures on public lands. There's public safety, protection of sensitive natural or cultural resources, and preventing ruts during the muddy, snow-melt period just to name a few. Having worked on road closures at one point in my life, I knew what the Forest Service was up against. An area of public lands easily accessible by a large population is hard to keep closed, especially to vehicles. No matter how much time and cement you have, someone has more time and the machinery to undo your efforts once you've left. I saw quiet recreationists like myself, but the numerous trashed-out camps told me this was an area where high school kids snuck away to party--often, and they can be a determined bunch. It was a place for ORVs to get out and ride, a group that can be equally determined to get where they want. Fortunately, there were no major scars from them, but it was likely a large jeep-type vehicle that did in the gate. Summer is basically here, so it is time for the gate to be open according to them. If the Forest Service really wanted to keep the gate closed, it would be an immense undertaking of money and manpower (multiple closure points, increased visits by Law Enforcement, etc). Often in cases like this, the agency has no choice but to pick its battles, focusing on smaller areas/roads that have sensitive resources like habitat for endangered species or archaeological sites.

When closures don't work, I try to give the agency the benefit of the doubt. However, sometimes it seems that the reason a closure is not effective is not because the agency is overwhelmed, but rather that it simply won't enforce the rules. As many know, one of AWF's Legacy Volunteer Service Projects is Cebolla Canyon. It is a rare area in that it has closure in place--for cows. From Cebolla Spring down to Lobo Canyon, a couple thousand acres have been excluded from cattle grazing, at least on paper. Those that know this fact and have been heading out to Cebolla Canyon for the last decade know it is very unlikely to find the enclosure free of cattle. In the fall of 2010, I was doing surveys of the area and was informed that the cows we were seeing had been there all summer and the BLM was aware of this. Two days before an AWF Project, the cows were finally rounded up. Again, I try to give benefit of the doubt, but this seemed too much like a problem that was ignored until the agency knew the a large number of interested public would be there. Then, suddenly, the rancher is there taking care of his cows.

So, it was no surprise to find cows in the enclosure when we were there for the April project. Steve Carson, a restoration professional, traced their tracks to the spot where the cows were getting past the fence. After the project, he sent a note to the BLM letting them know that it would be easy to fix the fence when we returned there in May. In the end, it seems this is all we can do. Write polite letters, offer to do fence repair, and continue to hope that BLM will require the rancher to follow the rules. In this dry year, the cows were chewing away at the vegetation already hit by elk, effectively making it look like a lawn.

The restoration structures we built will certainly still be effective when the rain comes, but the additional "roughage" provided by standing vegetation really makes a difference in water flows and nutrient capture.



Illustration by Einat Peled  
galemedicine.yale.edu

Such is the complicated nature of restoration work. In the end, it is still astonishing to see what has been accomplished through 1 or 2 volunteer projects a year for 10 years. AWF will back at Cebolla Canyon over the May 18 - 20 weekend. There is plenty of rock to be moved and **willow to be planted!** We hope to see you there.

## WildEarth Guardians Offer Projects at Valles Caldera National Preserve

### Remove Fence to Open Corridors for Wildlife

WildEarth Guardians offers you an opportunity to do restoration work at Valles Caldera, working in the large caldera meadow visible from Highway 4.

Join Guardians volunteers in their continuing work to pull miles of fence that has for decades stood as a barrier to elk migrations that are critical to a fully functional ecosystem. [Fence removal to restore wildlife corridors on the Preserve is an effort that Albuquerque Wildlife Federation volunteers have also undertaken in past years.]

You will be rewarded for your hard work by seeing wildlife moving freely in the park for the first time since the early 1900s.

### Project Dates: May 12 and June 9

Email Angelisa, Guardians office manager, at [aespinoza@wildearthguardians.org](mailto:aespinoza@wildearthguardians.org), or call (505) 988-9126 x0 for more information or to RSVP.

Wear work clothes. Bring your own lunch, gloves, water, and water-resistant clothing as the weather may be unpredictable. WildEarth Guardians will provide snacks, additional water, and tools.

## RENEWED MEMBER

Steve Carson - Patron

*Thank You*

## PROJECT #3

### Cebolla Canyon II

May 18-20, 2012

### Weekend Campout

Join AWF for the second Volunteer Service Project at Cebolla Canyon of the 2012 season. This is an area with which we have a long history. Our restoration efforts led to receiving a federal and a state grant to do work on an even larger scale. Over the past year, contractors have been out doing this work, but there is much to be done. In many places where restoration structures or planting was needed, machinery was either not feasible or inappropriate. Hand work, like that from AWF Volunteers, is the only way to get the job done. There is MUCH to do -- please join us.

**WHERE:** Cebolla Canyon, El Malpais National Conservation Area, SE of Grants, NM

**THE PROJECT:** We will be doing vegetation planting and structural work with rock.

**GEAR:** Everything you need for a weekend of camping. Bring the usual gear for the work – gloves, hat, long sleeves, long pants, sturdy boots, and sunscreen. Don't forget warm clothes for the evenings and plenty of water.

**FOOD:** AWF will provide breakfast burritos on Saturday morning and bison or veggie burgers to go with a potluck on Saturday evening. Please bring your own lunches, Friday dinner, and Sunday breakfast.

**TO SIGN UP:** Contact Michael Scialdone, "Scial", at [rioscial@gmail.com](mailto:rioscial@gmail.com) or 505-480-2906. Directions and further details will be sent to you.

## 2012 PROJECT SCHEDULE

March 17	Cedro Creek – East Mountains
April 20-22	Cebolla Canyon I
May 18-20	Cebolla Canyon II
June 15-17	Rio de las Vacas
July 20-22	Valles Caldera I
August 17-19	Valles Caldera II
Sept 14-16	Limestone Canyon
Oct 20	Sandia Ranger District

# RECAP

## PROJECT #2

### CEBOLLA CANYON I PARTICIPANTS

Michelle Barnes  
 Steve Carson  
 Jack Crane  
 Darlene Crane  
 Mathew Schultz  
 Rich Diver  
 Barb Diver  
 Jodey Kougioulis  
 Mary Ann McGraw  
 Bianca Montoya  
 Toby Rosenblatt  
 Michael Scialdone  
 Jesse Shuck  
 Bob Tilley  
 Hamish Thomson  
 Lucille Vegil  
 Greg Weier  
 Bill Zeedyk

## Cebolla Canyon I in April

Our April Volunteer Service Project was held over the April 20 - 22 weekend. Once again, we were out at Cebolla Canyon in the El Malpais National Conservation Area. About 20 people joined in the project. As we have mentioned before, this is an area that we have been working on for many years and those efforts led to grants, state and federal, to do even larger scale restoration at Cebolla Spring and down the canyon. This past fall, contractors were out using machinery to hit a number of sites. First, they "improved" the road going up to Cebolla Spring, upgrading it from horrendous to just bad. If you knew the road and recognized the changes, you'd realize quite a bit of machinery skill went into what they did. This same skill was put to building restoration structures.

For the work done last fall, a large amount of rock was locally harvested or hauled in. This rock was piled throughout the canyon. The task for the volunteers was to take this rock and build structures that will hold back the water coming down from Cebolla Spring and increase the amount of wetland/wet meadow. With the hope of catching some monsoon rains, it was decided to have back-to-back projects to have as many structures in place as possible before the rains hit. So if you missed this project, we hope you can come out in May. Many thanks go out to the volunteers who participated in April!



Photos courtesy of Jack and Darlene Crane

## Legislation Introduced for Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Area by Senators Bingaman and Udall

*From Kent Salazar, Region 10 Director/National Wildlife Federation Board*

Senator Bingaman recently introduced S. 2468, the Columbine-Hondo Wilderness Act, to permanently protect the 45,000-acre Columbine Hondo Wilderness Study Area. The legislation is being praised by a coalition of New Mexicans who have been working for years to see this wild land preserved. Senator Tom Udall is cosponsoring this important bill.

The Columbine Hondo area north of Taos boasts some of the state's most spectacular landscapes, encompassing the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, including Gold Hill, its highest peak. Elk, mountain lions, black bear, Rocky Mountain bighorn sheep, pine marten, and Rio Grande cutthroat trout make their home here. It contains the headwaters for two important rivers that supply water to the acequias used by the community.

Congress formally recognized the wilderness values and character of the Columbine Hondo area in 1980 and gave it interim protection as a wilderness study area (WSA). Designation as wilderness is the highest form of protection, and bars any development.

New Mexico's Senators deserve our thanks in taking this major step forward in protecting this important place. Please make a quick call to their offices and let the staff person who answers that you'd like to say thank you to the Senator for introducing the Columbine Hondo Wilderness Act and encourage him to continue to work for its enactment this year.

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Please consider calling your Senators to say thank you!

**Senator Jeff Bingaman: 1-800-443-8658**

**Senator Tom Udall: (202) 224-6621**

Reference new bill to permanently protect Columbine Hondo Area.



Photo courtesy of columbinehondo.org

## Connection and Connectivity: Key to a Living Rio Grande

The Rio Grande, the iconic artery of life in the Southwest...has been dammed, diverted and dried up to the point that today it is one of the most endangered rivers in North America.

On top of that long list of threats, climate change, reduced snowpack and drought make the river's condition even more dire.

But recently Interior Secretary Ken Salazar asked New Mexicans and citizens who care about the Rio Grande to consider what can be done to conserve the recreational, educational and ecological values of the river in central New Mexico.

The Secretary's Middle Rio Grande Conservation Initiative also comes at the same time that federal and state agencies are developing a separate plan for the protection of the river's endangered species.

...These two plans could be harmonized...to bring about long-overdue changes to protect the Rio Grande.

The unifying theme for both plans could be connection and connectivity: connecting people to the river by ensuring uniform access, trails and paths, and ensuring a secure supply of water that connects habitats all along the river's 180-mile path in central New Mexico.

Without a secure supply of its own water, not only will the river's endangered species be more imperiled, but the recreational and educational values of the river will be diminished as well.

The common ingredient to ensure both connection and connectivity is federal leadership.

*— Adapted from a message by WildEarth Guardians*

# Catron County Approves New 'Predator' Ordinance

According to the *Silver City Daily Press*, Catron County sheriff's deputies may shoot any predator they believe poses "imminent danger of bodily harm" to humans, under an ordinance the County Commission approved on April 25.

The ordinance is a revision of a 2007 county statute that allowed for the killing of any wolf that local authorities think is a threat.

The new statute claims that "all predators can pose serious threats to human settlements, households and residents"; and states that "the county may issue a dispatch order to lethally remove a predator when there is an imminent threat of bodily injury." Commissioners wrote that "human incidents with wolves ... are increasing rather than decreasing."

There have been no confirmed reports of wolf attacks on people since the lobos were reintroduced to the Southwest in 1998, or since wolf releases began in Yellowstone National Park more than 15 years ago.

Apparently referring to livestock depredations by wolves, the ordinance cites "escalating incidences (that) include human suffering, loss of income, loss and damage to private property, and disruption of the normal functioning of government and communities in Catron County."

In a news release, the commissioners said there have been "persistent problems of habituated predators prowling around homes and other places of human activities."

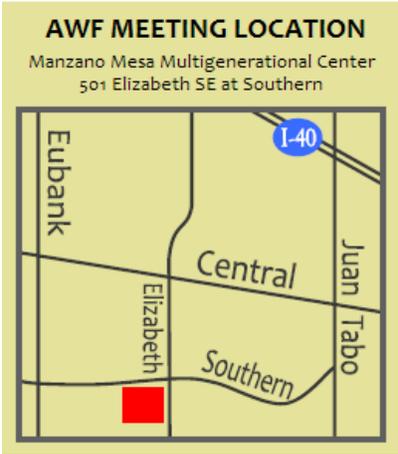
– Excerpted from an article by Jim Owen, *Daily Press* Staff

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 PO Box 20225 | Albuquerque, NM 87154  
 abq.nmwildlife.org



## AWF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Albuquerque Wildlife Federation | PO Box 20225 | Albuquerque, NM 87154  
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) \_\_\_\_\_  
 address \_\_\_\_\_  
 city, state, zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

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

- 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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_